

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



October 2016

Vol. 121, No. 10

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THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON

Analysis of Vedanta Philosophy IV

The whole of nature comprising millions and millions of souls is under the will of God. The whole of it is under His control. He is the eternal Ruler. So say the dualists. Then the question comes: If God is the ruler of this universe, why must we suffer so much? They say it is not God's fault. It is our fault that we suffer. Whatever we sow we reap. He did not do anything to punish us. Man is born poor, or blind, or some other way? What is the reason? He had done something before, he was born that way. The Jiva has been existing for all time, was never created. It has been doing all sorts of things all the time. Whatever we do reacts upon us. If we do good, we shall have happiness, and if evil, unhappiness. So the Jiva goes on enjoying and suffering, and doing all sorts of things. What comes after death? All these Vedanta philosophers admit that this Jiva is by its own nature pure; but ignorance covers its real nature they say. As by evil deeds it has covered itself with ignorance, so by good deeds it becomes conscious of its own nature again. The nature of every being is pure. When through good deeds all its sins and misdeeds have been washed away, then the Jiva becomes pure again, and when it becomes pure, it goes to what is called Devayana. Its organ of speech enters the mind. You cannot think without words. Wherever there is thought, there must be words. As words enter the mind, so the mind is resolved into the Prana, and the Prana into the Jiva. Then the Jiva gets quickly out of



the body, and goes to the solar regions. This universe has sphere after sphere. This earth is the world sphere, in which are moons, suns, and stars. Beyond that there is the solar sphere, and beyond that another which they call the lunar sphere. Beyond that there is the sphere which they call the sphere of lightning, the electric sphere, and when the Jiva goes there, there comes another Jiva, already perfect, to receive it, and takes it to another world, the highest heaven called the Brahmaloka, where the Jiva lives eternally, no more to be born or to die. It enjoys through eternity and gets all sorts of powers, except the power of creation. There is only one ruler of the universe, and that is God. No one can become God; the dualists maintain that if you say you are God, it is a blasphemy. This is the highest man who has attained the love of God, who has become perfectly unselfish, perfectly purified, who has given up all desires, and who does not want to do anything except worship and love God.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2015), 1.397-98.

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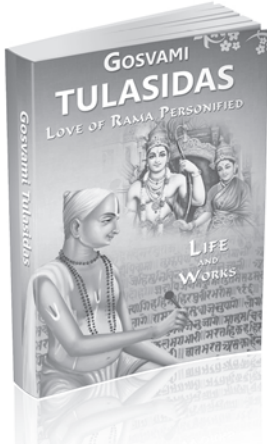


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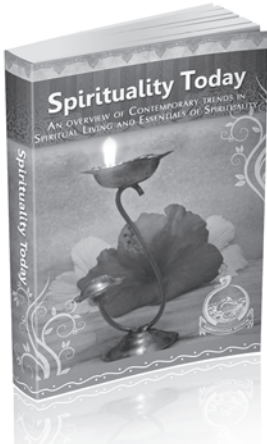
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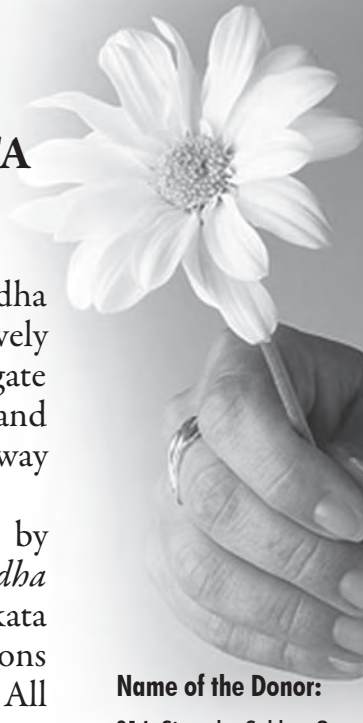
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Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

Maitrayaniya Upanishad

October 2016

Vol. 121, No. 10

मैत्रायणीयोपनिषत्

ते होचुर्भगवन्नभिवाद्यसीत्यभिवाद्यसीति । निहितमस्माभिरेतद्यथावदुक्तं मनसीत्यथोत्तरं प्रश्नमनुब्रूहीति ।
अग्निर्वायुरादित्यः कालो यः प्राणोऽन्नं ब्रह्मा रुद्रो विष्णुरित्येकेऽन्यमभिध्यायन्त्येकेऽन्यं श्रेयः कतमो
यः सोऽस्माकं ब्रूहीति तान् होवाचेति ।

॥४.५॥

*Te hochur-bhagavann-abhivadyasity-abhivadyasiti. Nihitam-asmabhir-etad-yathavad-uktam
manasity-athottaram prashnam-anubruhiti. Agnir-vayur-adityah kalo yah prano'nnam brahma
rudro vishnur-ity-ekenyam-abhidhyayanty-ekenyam shreyah katamo yah so'smakam bruhihi tan
hovacheti.*

(4.5)

They said: 'Revered Sir, you are our teacher and worthy of adoration, indeed worthy of adoration. Whatever you have said has been deeply impressed on our minds. Now, kindly answer another question. Among fire, air, sun, time, vital breath, food, Brahma, Rudra, and Vishnu, some contemplate upon one, some others upon another. Please tell us which one is the best for us.' Then, he said to them.

(4.5)

THIS MONTH

EMOTIONS HAUNT US and make us dance to their tunes. Their nature and ways to transcend them are discussed in **The Matrix of Emotions**.

Swami Vivekananda was introduced to the club culture of Chicago when he went there. But, the austere monk that he was, Swamiji could not become an active member of this group. In **Swami Vivekananda's First Impression of Chicago Hospitality: The Social Context Behind the Culture Clash**, Diane Marshall, graphic artist and art historian, paints a poignant picture of the erstwhile social life of Chicago and details various aspects of Swamiji's life at that time.

Vandana Jani, a researcher and the co-founder of Vivekananda Vidyapith, Wayne, New Jersey, has found a manuscript in Swami Vivekananda's handwriting that has the script and the translation of the 'Tri-Madhu' Vedic verses. She presents this new finding in **Swami Vivekananda's Unpublished Transcription and Translation of the 'Tri-Madhu' Verses**.

Steven F Walker, Professor of Comparative Literature, Rutgers University, New Jersey traces **Swami Vivekananda's Unique Relationship with Buddha**.

Bharatwaj Iyer, a masters student of finance and economics at the University of Mumbai, tries to correlate the important concepts of Vedanta with those of management and tries to give us a model of holistic management in **Vedanta and Human Management**.

In the ninth instalment of the edited transcript of a series of lectures on **Mandukya Upanishad**

given by Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, who was the thirteenth president of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, we are told that one can gradually progress in religion and spirituality by going beyond ordinary rituals and understanding one's true nature.

Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, has been asked various questions regarding various aspects of spiritual life by the young and old alike, over a period of time. The sixth instalment of the collection of such questions and his answers to them is given in **Vedanta Answers**.

The importance of struggle and the need for going beyond fear in spiritual life is discussed in the seventh instalment of **The Psychological Aspects of Spiritual Life** by Swami Nityasthananda, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysuru. Different faculties of the mind and the need for coordinating them is also expounded.

The Heart of Acharya Ramanuja is the second instalment of the story of the transformation of a young man and woman by the guidance of Acharya Ramanuja, into a highly devout devotee-couple. They also influence the understanding of Acharya Ramanuja's disciples. This story is this month's *Traditional Tales* and has been translated from the Tamil book *Arulneri Kathaigal*.

In **Backpacking with the Saints**, Belden C Lane, Professor Emeritus of Theological Studies, American Religion, and History of Spirituality at Saint Louis University, Missouri, explores spirituality through backcountry wandering. From this book, we bring you this month's *Manana*.

The Matrix of Emotions

WE DISPLAY EMOTIONS and get caught in them. Why do we laugh, get angry, feel sad, and experience numerous other feelings? Is it characteristic of human beings? Or is it not so special a trait after all? Whatever may be the views of biologists or anthropologists on this matter, the intensity of suffering that emotions cause is well known. Even saints are known to have struggled with the power of emotions. That they are not easy to handle is the cause of most human misery.

Though emotions are problematic, human beings supposedly become more 'humane' because of them. The same faculty that limits the possibility of peace strangely enables to provide comfort and succour to others and oneself. This contradiction is not confined to the ruminations of philosophers but is a puzzling reality. Restraining emotions seems to mean removing the very essence of human existence. Yet, even the most uneducated person is aware of the vagaries of unrestrained emotions. How to solve this problem? This continues to be a question that consumes the minds of thinkers for centuries.

Some have tried to solve the problem of emotions by classifying them into the good and the bad. When an emotion causes happiness, it is good, and when an emotion causes suffering, it is bad. But such a simplistic classification at best hides the problem. Anything that is produced within us and yet is beyond our control cannot be positive, irrespective of the temporary or apparent good effect it produces. Emotions tiringly engage our minds. All our energy and time are

sapped by them. Does humanity need to resign itself to the control of emotions to establish its uniqueness? Much is made of the emotion of laughter. Laughter is celebrated and is proven to

Emotions cloud our understanding and also skew our perspectives. Our vision is covered by the cataract of emotions.

have physiological and psychological benefits. Morning walkers trying to artificially laugh in various groups or laughter clubs out in the open are a common sight. Does this all mean that laughter has to be cultivated forcefully to live in peace? That would mean that one would have to depend on an enforced exercise for attaining peace instead of naturally achieving it. It is much like a person who is dependent on tranquillisers for sleep, which ought to come naturally.

Emotions are just emotions and rob our independence, no matter whether they are positive or negative. By their very nature, they are binding and are bad for this reason alone. But, emotions are considered to be the driving force of human development. Here, emotion is confused with resolve. Emotion drains our mental resources. A resolve made with proper thought and concern would be much firmer than a resolve arising out of the pulls of emotions. Emotions cloud our understanding and also skew our perspectives. Our vision is covered by the cataract of emotions. How should we tackle or manage them? In managing emotions, we have to decide whether we need to manage them without reducing their

power or whether we should just remove their poisonous fangs. Emotions are interpretations of life events. That is why they differ so much from person to person. This fact in itself is proof enough that emotions by themselves lack any power or influence unless we grant it to them.

To succeed in controlling our minds and the senses and to rein them according to what needs to be done, we need to defang emotions and not be influenced by them. That way, emotions would be just various states of the mind to which we would be indifferent. Some psychologists and psychiatrists seem to suggest that spirituality is nothing but management of some so-called positive emotions and social connections. But, this idea of spirituality is rather primitive. Any kind of life and world view that binds us to the causes of suffering cannot, by its very nature, lead us beyond suffering. True spirituality is going beyond suffering.

Mental health has been associated with proper identification with emotions like love, compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, and so on. Most faith traditions of the world also emphasise these qualities. But, they again belong to the preliminary stage of spiritual life. Spiritual growth and maturity is characterised by complete detachment to all emotions. Emotions categorised as positive, like love, require unselfishness, at least to some degree. That unselfishness needs to be expanded to a complete unselfishness, so detached that one does not need to depend on emotions, even the positive ones. Then the mind becomes free to take instructions and is not stuck in the criss-cross of the matrix of emotions.

The human brain is broadly divided into the primitive and the more advanced parts. The primitive part of the human brain is the seat of primal instincts like hunger and sleep. Though not evolved, this part of the human brain engages the body and the mind at a very deep level, so deep that its very existence and influence

become unnoticeable. Any attempt to go beyond suffering has to be an attempt to go beyond the primal instincts too. And so, spirituality should aim at rewiring the primitive part of our brain. This can be done by changing the regular patterns or routines that arise from this primitive brain and replacing new patterns and routines in their stead. The idea of the body resides in the primitive brain. When someone flees at the slightest possibility of bodily harm, it is this brain that becomes active. The group of emotions that reside in this part of the brain could as well be termed selfish. Baser instincts are also selfish. So are all other emotions.

This primitive brain has to be brought under control and it is in this brain that the idea of one's true personality should be impressed firmly by constantly practising spiritual disciplines like japa and meditation. When the ideas of one not being the body and the mind are strongly embedded on this brain, then even when one's advanced brain is disturbed or becomes weak and the primitive brain takes over, the spiritual understanding of one's personality would not fade. There are numerous instances where spiritual aspirants who were practising various spiritual disciplines for a long time, continued doing so, even when afflicted by ailments like dementia or Alzheimer's. This stresses the need for controlling emotions in the primitive brain. A change in the primitive brain can be brought about only by repeated and intense practice. That is exactly what is needed in the case of managing emotions too.

All notions of positive emotions are thus illusory just like the rest of the manifest universe. Emotions are bad because they emphasise one's distinct ego. In reality there is only one Truth and no multiple egos. And so, it is very pertinent that these emotions are disjointed from the ego by complete detachment. Only then can one's true nature be realised.



Swami Vivekananda's First Impression of Chicago Hospitality: The Social Context Behind the Culture Clash

Diane Marshall

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, I imagine, might be a trifle annoyed at the time and attention historians pay to incidents in his life that he deemed unimportant to the greater picture of his spiritual work. I confess that I find Swamiji's web of connections and minor acquaintances fascinating not only for glimpses of who he was, but sometimes for affirmation of who he was *not*.

Although Swamiji acquired a reputation for preaching to and mixing with the upper echelons of American society, there were few wealthy people with whom he found genuine rapport. When he was newly arrived in Chicago in August 1893, he received multiple doses of culture shock, particularly regarding the hospitality of the rich, and he instinctively felt a desire to retreat from said company.

On 20 August 1893 Swamiji wrote a very informative letter to Alasinga Perumal from Breezy Meadows, a farm belonging to the writer Kate Sanborn near Holliston, Massachusetts.¹ He brought Alasinga up to date on his travels, stating that he had spent 'about twelve days' in Chicago and 'almost every day I used to go to the Fair' (11). Then he wrote: 'The lady to whom Varada Rao introduced me and her husband belong to the highest Chicago society, and they were so very kind to me' (11-2). Asim Chaudhuri found a letter from Grace Howe to Rev. Jenkins Lloyd Jones written in November 1893

that finally identified the 'high society' couple that had offered their hospitality to Swamiji. This article builds upon that discovery, identifying—with a high degree of probability—the club and the yacht that Swamiji mentioned to Howe. Here is the pertinent extract from her letter:

It seems he had a letter to Erskine Phelps and sent it to him on his arrival. They called on him at once took him to their house. He happened to speak of them the other day said 'They are very kind friendly people—were very kind to me, but I could not live there.' When we asked why 'Why,' he said in a perplexed way—'I do not know—I think they are fashionable. They took me to the club, off on a yacht, they drank all the time—when I said I do not drink they ordered it for me just the same. They swore too, all the time. (He meant the men he met). I had seen no Americans. I did not understand it—but I could not live so—I had to go away.'²

Swamiji's comment, 'I had seen no Americans,' as Howe put it, sounds a bit contradictory, because of course he had conversed with Sanborn and perhaps a few other Americans while in transit through Canada. I think he was attempting to describe a social context that he had had no previous experience of, that is, gentlemen's club society—American style.

Howe's letter identified Erskine Mason Phelps and his wife Anna Wilder Phelps as the couple who picked up Swamiji from his hotel



Erskine Mason Phelps (1839–1910)

and took him to their home at 1703 Indiana Avenue, which was south of the Art Institute, but north of the Exposition grounds. Phelps was a prominent Chicago merchant in the firm Phelps, Dodge, and Palmer, and a commissioner of the World's Columbian Exposition.

Phelps led an extensive club life. His biography listed memberships in the Chicago, Commercial, Calumet, Iroquois, South Shore Country, Saddle and Cycle, Bankers, Mid-Day, Pickwick Country, and Washington Park Clubs of Chicago. Beyond Chicago, he was a member of the Manhattan Club of New York, the Temple and Algonquin Clubs of Boston, and the Thatched House of London.³

Well-to-do American men took to heart the English idea that a man's club was his castle. Here, according to Cleveland Armory, he could exercise four cherished freedoms: 'Freedom of speech against democracy, freedom of worship of aristocracy, freedom from want from tipping, and above all, freedom from fear of women.'⁴

One of the clubs Phelps belonged to that we know Swamiji visited, was the Chicago Club. Swamiji entered the club as a guest of John B Lyon, his host during the Parliament of Religions. The Chicago Club had been organised in 1868. In 1892 Julian Ralph described it as 'the old club of the "old rich"' and *Harper's Weekly* gave a deceptively simple reason for its founding: 'Undoubtedly the men of Chicago founded the Chicago Club because they wanted a home outside of their own dwelling places where they would be comfortable, and especially where they could take their mid-day meal in congenial surroundings, the goodness of the meal being assured.'⁶

Truly, the goodness of the meal inside the Chicago Club was assured not merely by the quality of the cuisine, but because there were no women about to curb the men's language or caution their libations or cramp their convivial style. In fact, of the old Chicago private men's clubs that managed to survive, most barred women until the late twentieth century.

As for the well-to-do Chicago women whose husbands took their noon meal at their clubs, they were free to lunch with their friends and attend their own clubs in the afternoons. Sometimes they attended lectures given by a certain sannyasi from India—but this is getting ahead of Swamiji's first fortnight in Chicago.

The Chicago Club still stands at its 1893 location, the corner of Van Buren Street and Michigan Avenue, although the building was reconstructed in 1929. It still enjoys a formidable reputation as one of the most exclusive and powerful private organisations in the country. In 1982 the *Tribune* quipped: 'How do you get in? Don't ask. How tough is it to join? In a word, *very*.'⁷ In 1996 the *Tribune* described it as 'a place where a gubernatorial candidacy might be born or a \$200 million bond deal decided over the

course of a routine luncheon.⁸ Today, its website exudes the aura of a bastion of power.

In the nineteenth century the Chicago Club's hauteur could be summed up by its famously restrictive entrance sign: 'No Dogs, Democrats, Women or Reporters'.⁹ Technically, none of those restrictions applied to Swamiji when he visited the club during September 1893, yet the club's intimidating notice uncomfortably resembled signs posted at the gates of select British clubs in India proclaiming 'Dogs and Indians not allowed'. During the World's Fair, however, the city was in a welcoming mood and flung open its doors to scores of foreign dignitaries. Interestingly, Phelps, a member of the Chicago Club, was also a solid Democrat—so much for exclusion on political grounds—but the club's ban on the press was strictly upheld. And certainly conservative nineteenth-century men would have sooner relaxed the rules for dogs than for women.

Swamiji marvelled at the freedom and independence displayed by American women in society. Even so, some strict rules governing women's behaviour in the 1890s have simply been forgotten. For example, 'no proper Chicago lady ever lifted her eyes when passing the Chicago

Club', even though gentlemen of her acquaintance might clearly be seen lounging behind its large glass windows.¹⁰ According to the reminiscence of Kathryn Shortall Dunbaugh, when she was ten years old, she waved to her grandfather, John D Shortall, who was sitting inside the Chicago Club with Robert T Lincoln. That evening, she was taken aside and reproved: 'My dear, when a lady passes the windows of a men's club, she never looks up' (ibid.).

Cornelia Conger, to whom we are indebted for her endearing childhood memories of Swamiji during the Parliament of Religions, experienced a similar scolding. She related that when she waved to her uncle, William C Lyon, whom she saw standing in the window of the Chicago Club, she was reprimanded and told 'when a gentleman is in his club, he is invisible' (ibid.).

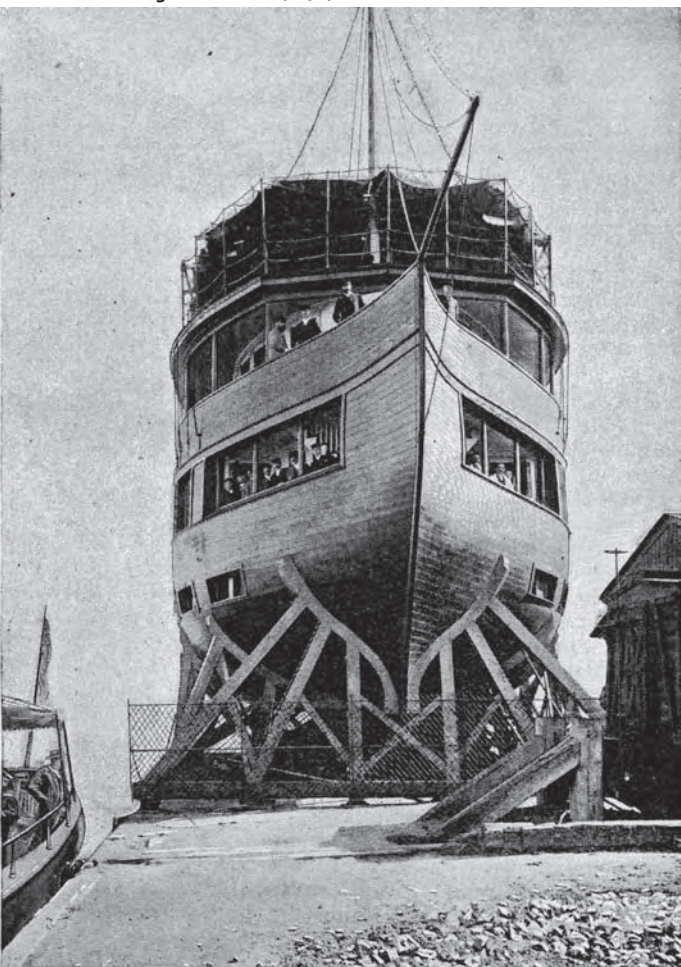
The only woman who was actually allowed to stay—secretly—for three days—in the Chicago Club throughout its century of barring women, was Emily Lyon, Swamiji's kind hostess during the Parliament of Religions. Her backdoor admittance was an act of mercy because she nursed a member, Charles Rhodes, who was suffering a crisis of typhoid fever (83).

Argo Club Veranda Deck (1893)



Erskine Phelps belonged to another club that was even more selective and limited in its membership. It was to this club—I believe—that he invited Swamiji. The Argo Club was organised in 1891 and incorporated in 1892. The Argo Club drew its members from the Chicago Club's roster—presumably only those members interested in yachting who would pay the additional fees. Edward T Blair called it 'the most expensive club ever started in Chicago' because it was intended to last only for the duration of the World's Columbian Exposition (52). The membership fee was \$250, but there was a clubhouse and a yacht to support as well.¹¹ I checked the membership

Argo Clubhouse (1892)



roster for the Argo Club and confirmed that Erskine M Phelps was member No. 42 and his business partner, George E P Dodge was No. 43.¹²

Phelp's Argo Club membership plus Howe's letter make fairly strong circumstantial evidence that Swamiji sailed on the Argo Club's yacht in Lake Michigan for at least a few hours. By examining the other clubs that Phelps took membership in, through a process of elimination, the Argo Club stands out as the one that fits Swamiji's description of a club that was 'off on a yacht'.¹³ Furthermore, the Argo Club's vessel was a steam-yacht, built for leisure and pleasure, where the passengers could socialise while the skipper navigated the craft. If Swamiji had been aboard a sailing yacht, all hands on deck would have been concentrating on handling the ship.¹⁴

On 18 May 1892 the following announcement appeared in the *Chicago Inter Ocean*:

The Argo Club, of Chicago, is composed of rich young businessmen who are inclined to yachting and sport upon the water. The handsome ship-shaped club-house in the lake basin at the foot of Randolph street, where they give fashionable receptions every now and then, has been the nearest approach to any craft of their own, however, in common, until now.

Captain John Prindiville has just bought the crack steam yacht *Leila* for them at Detroit, and she is to come here forthwith. The *Leila* has a guaranteed speed of eighteen miles an hour, and has fine accommodations for 200 passengers. She will prove a most valuable acquisition to the Chicago squadron. The price paid for her was \$15,000. Among the members of the Argo Club are Messrs. Henry Norton, Charles McDonald, of Deering & Co. E.S. Worthington, W.T. Baker, and Robert Fleming.

On 28 May the *Tribune* reported that the *Leila* was put in a South Chicago shipyard for a \$5,000 overhaul. 'Its owners intend to make the *Leila* the finest craft in this harbor.' On 11 August the *Inter*

Ocean posted a notice of change of name for the steam yacht *Leila* to *Argo*. A sketch of the yacht published in *Harper's Weekly* on 20 August 1892 still shows the name *Leila*. *Harper's* said: "The club owns a one-hundred foot steam-yacht built by the Herreshoffs." Nathaniel Green Herreshoff and his blind brother, John Brown Herreshoff, were shipbuilders in Bristol, Rhode Island, with a high reputation for designing racing steam-yachts.¹⁵

The *Argo* ferried guests to and from the Exposition and once even towed the *Santa Maria*, a full-scale reproduction of one of Christopher Columbus's ships. The Argonauts continued to sail their steam-yacht until its beautiful fittings were ruined by an ice storm in March 1895.¹⁶ In September 1895 the *Argo* was sold for only \$2,500 and moved to Galveston, Texas.¹⁷ On 28 January 1897 the *Argo* collided with a fruit steamship in the Mississippi River near New Orleans and sank, taking two passengers down with her.¹⁸

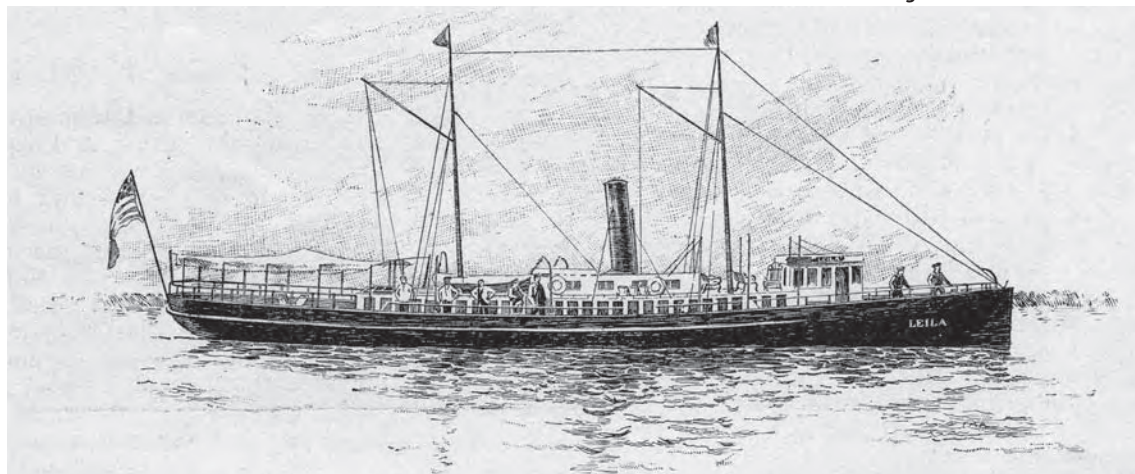
When he was boarding the Argo Club's deluxe steam-yacht, Swamiji must have seen one of the cleverest architectural oddities ever built in Chicago, because the club's yacht docked next to it. Did Swamiji go inside it? Visiting the Argo clubhouse was a treat in itself.

The idea for the Argo Club was conceived

during the hot summer of 1890 when Stuyvesant Fish, president of the Illinois Central Railroad was wishing for a place on the lakefront to enjoy the coolness of the water while entertaining. Over dinner at the Chicago Club a group hatched an idea to build a casino at the end of the Illinois Central pier. In June 1891 John Welborn Root, the architect responsible for much of the Exposition planning, approached the Building Department, but could not get approval for a wooden building on a railroad pier.¹⁹ With a stroke of impish genius, he then designed a building that looked like a boat, and proposed that it was a watercraft and not a building. An additional rationale for the ship-shape of the clubhouse was its homage to Columbus's Spanish caravels, which would soon be visiting Chicago as sailing reproductions. The prow of Root's 'ship' was supported by stocks, as if it was in dry dock. Theoretically it could be launched. The conceit worked. Permission was granted.

It was built right on Illinois Central Pier No. 3 at the end of Randolph Street. Its location was conveniently near to the downtown offices of most of its members, yet it seemed like a world away. 'The boat [clubhouse] is so situated that all the shipping of the port floats by it, both coming and going, and while it is more than half a

The Argonaut Club's Steam-Yacht



mile out in the lake, it is sheltered by the government piers that form the outer harbor or refuge, so that however stormy and rough the lake itself may be, the sailors of the club have a safe and quiet expanse of water over a mile long by half a mile to sail in.²⁰

Apparently it was originally planned that the clubhouse could only be accessed by ladder, which suited the men's adventurous spirit.²¹ However, the main purpose of the Argo Club was to entertain—and impress—a variety of genteel visitors during the Fair; therefore it was conceded that women would be admitted on Tuesdays and Fridays. They were provided access via an enclosed staircase under the clubhouse.

The Argo is boarded by a narrow stairway leading into what may be called its hold, or first storey. Here are the kitchen, larder, and servants' bunks. From this, narrow gangways lead up to the middle deck, or second storey, which mainly consists of a dining-room with a large fireplace of red brick and polished tiles at the stern end. From this one ascends to the main deck, or third storey, which has many little nooks and lookouts and ten bedrooms, five on each side. Above all comes the hurricane deck, with a raised platform at one end, admirably fitted for an orchestra, while the rest of the deck is suitable for dancing, and outside of the different storeys and along the rails are promenades extending entirely around the club boat.²²

All concurred that the Argo Club was a pleasant place to escape the city heat. The *Harper's* wrote: 'There is a wonderful sense of luxury about the boat in hot weather. There is always a breeze around the Argo and it flaps the window-shades and bellies out the curtains.' The *Inter Ocean* described its evening ambience: 'The view from this place was most enchanting. The lights in the city and from the boats at anchor in the harbor sent their reflections far and near.'²³

As for the club's yacht:

Every afternoon at half-past three o'clock and every evening at half-past eight o'clock, it seems to materialize out of the confusion of vessels among the wharves, and comes to a stop at the end of the pier in the shadow of the club-house. If only one member is there he may take it and sail to Evanston or Jackson Park or straight out into the sea-like lake until Chicago becomes nothing but a brown bank of fog in the distance, and the gulls are the boat's only companions.²⁴

Although intended to last only for the duration of the Fair, the ship-shaped casino continued to be used as a clubhouse into the new century. In September 1898 its isolated location made it a target for an attempted armed robbery. The robbers fired a shot, but fled empty-handed.²⁵ In September 1900 the Argo officially merged with the older Chicago Yacht Club.²⁶ It served as the club's headquarters for two years while a new clubhouse was built in the harbour at the foot of Adams Street.²⁷

The Argo Club limited its membership to fifty—supposedly the number of the ancient Greek Argonauts who went in search of the Golden Fleece with Jason.²⁸ The Club had only three officers, Skipper, First Mate, and Jack o' the Dust.²⁹ There were also a few honorary members—the New York journalist Julian Ralph being one.³⁰ Although the core Argo Club members were experienced Great Lakes seamen, it appears that another contingent, possibly including fifty-four-year-old Erskine Phelps, were arm-chair sailors at best. The *Tribune* commented: 'Had the surroundings of the Argonauts of old been as brilliant and beautiful they would never have started on their perilous voyage for Colchis through unknown and dangerous seas, but would have remained at home on the pier at Iolchos to drink in the cooling breezes that were wafted over the blue waves and listened to the

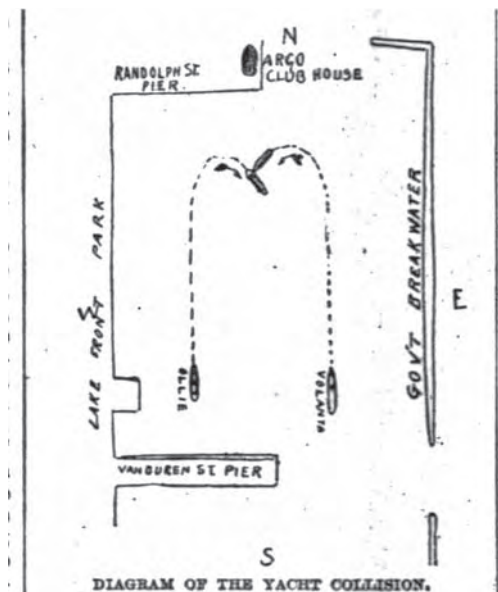
laughter, and the song, and the melody of a mandolin orchestra. But then, the original Argonauts were not club men of Chicago.³¹

As Swamiji discovered, the Argo Club men were sporting sailors and their language was bumptious. They had been magnanimously progressive to admit women at all—so they swore liberally when there were no women around because they felt obliged to celebrate that lack of restraint. They also swore to impress each other. Mark Twain had elevated the art of ornamental swearing in the popular consciousness and insisted that it required years of practice to attain proficiency.³² The *Tribune* reported on a trip the Argonauts made to Fort Sheridan on 27 August 1892, but could use only those words that were fit to print: “There was much talk of “shivering my tarry toplights”, and discussion of “how she blows” and other nautical subjects. Late comers were hailed as the veriest land-lubbers afraid of the rolling sea, and there were dark hints of rope ends. ... During the early part of the trip everybody was gay and there was much guessing and wagering as to the time required for the trip.”³³

The reporter also indicated, without saying so directly, that by the time the two-hour journey was up most of the members were too drunk to know whether they were coming or going.

Although Swamiji soon understood American slang, communication by competitive boasting was certainly not his style, nor did he regard highly coloured language as a mark of manliness. Sadly, for all their salty bluff and bluster the clubmen lacked the acuity to recognise a real master of language when they met one.

It was regrettable that the clubmen were so insensitive as to press drinks upon a foreign visitor. But from their provincial point of view, what sort of man who likes fine cigars would not want a drink? In the clubs, wrote *Harper's* about Chicago in 1892, ‘you find the thirsty soul



A Hand-drawn Map from
the Chicago Tribune, 22 September 1893

with whom conversation without whiskey is an unseemly waste of breath.’

Understandably, Swamiji was very uncomfortable in such company. He was *not* that kind of club man.

So Swamiji did not meet with any kindred spirits in the Argo Club. Joining a club where the common bond is wealth and the desire for more wealth made no sense to him. Even as late as 25 January 1894, after he had overcome his culture shock, you can sense some discomfort when he spoke at the wealthy Realtors Club banquet. He said: ‘So you could not expect me, to whom is allotted by my religion not the meanest square inch of earth, to speak before a body of real estate men, for in your presence I am like the [momentarily mute] miller’s boy.’³⁴

A number of Americans noted that while Swamiji was a highly intelligent and acutely perceptive man, he had a childlike, unworldly side. For example, when Swamiji visited the Chicago Club with John B Lyon, he innocently remarked to Lyon’s friends that he thought Lyon was ‘the most Christlike man I ever met.’³⁵ No doubt Lyon cringed—not just because he was a modest man—but because religious superlatives were simply not club talk.

‘In the clubs you see what the men of a town have a mind to show you,’ wrote *Harper’s* in 1892, ‘and as men do not go to clubs for the sake of ruminating on their miseries, or of imparting them to others than those, perhaps, who have what is occasionally the grievous misfortune of being excessively sympathetic, clubs are usually genial and stimulating to the pleasure-loving attributes and faculties of human nature.’³⁶

A capacity for sympathy was certainly not a ‘misfortune’ in Vivekananda’s eyes. As far as Chicago clubs went, perhaps the only club that he might have liked was the Sunset Club, which Rev. James Vila Blake belonged to. Swamiji preached at Blake’s Third Unitarian church on 24 September 1893. There was no swearing at the Sunset Club—no dues either. Its mission was to foster fraternity between men of all classes on the basis of good fellowship and tolerant discussion.

One last word about Erskine Phelps: he and Swamiji had at least one interest in common. Phelps was a great admirer of Napoleon and an avid student of Napoleonic history. He accrued one of the finest and most valuable collections of ‘Napoleonana’ in America. Phelps’s widow donated it to the University of Chicago Harper Memorial Library in 1910.³⁷ Phelps began collecting paintings, sculptures, books, and souvenirs about the French emperor in 1878. By 1893 this collection would have grown, I assume, to occupy a place of distinction in his house. The

collection was so considerable that in 1897 part of it went on display at the Art Institute. It is not known if Swamiji remained as a guest at the Phelps for his entire twelve-day sojourn in Chicago, but I would hope that he stayed there long enough to have an appreciable conversation with Phelps about Napoleon and to see some of the special treasures in his collection.

Now we can at least tentatively identify the yacht on which Swamiji sailed on a sparkling inland sea, gazing at Chicago and its ephemeral White City. In addition, it is worth considering the possibility that Swamiji and Phelps may have conversed late into the night surrounded by *objets d’art* pertaining to a small man from Corsica who started out with nothing and conquered most of Europe. At times Swamiji may not have wholly enjoyed the company he was in, but we can entertain the idea that he witnessed a very interesting bit of Chicago history.

Today, there is a loop at the east end of Randolph Street circling a marker for DuSable Harbour. Although the Argo Club stood over the water at the end of a long pier, the shoreline has shifted. During the 1920s the Lake Front was landfilled and extended into the lake by approximately half a mile in places. After scrutinising old maps, I estimate that the spot where Swamiji boarded the *Argo* is probably under South Lake Shore Drive, but the nearby DuSable marker is a better place to ponder the vista and Swamiji’s memory. Also at this location, the present Columbia Yacht Club housed in the Q S M V *Abegweit* carries on many Chicago yachting traditions begun over a century ago.

PB

The Lake Front Chicago (1893)



Notes and References

1. See *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 5.11–9.
2. Asim Chaudhuri, *Swami Vivekananda in*

- Chicago: New Findings* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2000), 149–50.
3. See J Seymour Currey, *Chicago: Its History and its Builders—A Century Of Marvelous Growth*, 5 vols (Chicago: S J Clarke, 1910), 4.20.
4. Cleveland Armory, *Who Killed Society* as quoted in Lisa Holton, *Members Only: A History and Guide to Chicago's Oldest Private Clubs*, (Chicago: Lake Claremont, 2008), 5.
5. Julian Ralph, *Harper's Chicago and the World's Fair* (Chicago: Harper, 1893), 18.
6. Henry Loomis Nelson, 'Clubs of Chicago', *Harper's Weekly*, 20 August 1892, 806.
7. Jon Anderson, 'Chicago's Ace of Clubs', *Chicago Tribune*, 11 April 1982, 12.
8. Michael Kilian, 'For Members Only', *Chicago Tribune*, 21 April 1996 <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-04-21/features/9604210241_1_private-clubs-chicago-club-21st-century> accessed 03 September 2016.
9. Evidently the colour bar was so unquestioned then that it did not merit mentioning.
10. Emmett Dedmon, *History of the Chicago Club* (1960) as quoted in *Members Only*, 46.
11. See 'To Be Manned by Social Heroes', *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago), 7 June 1891, 9. The \$250 fee multiplied by a limited membership of fifty, amounts to only \$12,500 and the yacht alone cost \$15,000.
12. *The Argonauts* (Chicago: 1893), 25, at the Chicago History Library.
13. There were other yacht clubs, namely the Chicago Yacht Club begun in 1875 and the Columbia Yacht Club begun in 1892, but yachting was competitive, so Phelps would not likely have joined more than one yacht club.
14. At the time, there was a Wisconsin sailing yacht named *Argo* that won many regattas in Lake Michigan.
15. *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, ed. James Terry White, 63 vols (New York: James T White, 1904), 12.353.
16. See 'Yacht Held in the Grip of Ice', *Chicago Tribune*, 14 March 1895, 1.
17. See 'Big Steam Yacht Argo Sold', *Chicago Tribune*, 12 September 1895, 6.
18. See 'Yacht is Sunk in Collision', *Inter Ocean* (Chicago), 29 January 1897, 10.
19. Root died on 15 January 1891. His biography *John Wellborn Root: A Study of His Life and Work* (Cambridge: Houghton and Mifflin, 1896) was written by his sister-in-law, Harriet Monroe. Monroe also met Swamiji.
20. Julian Ralph, 'Chicago's Argonauts', *Harper's Weekly*, 20 August 1892, 1091.
21. *Members Only*, 52.
22. See 'On Board the "Argo"', *Chicago Tribune*, 25 January 1891, 9.
23. 'Modern Argonauts', *Inter Ocean*, 10 June 1891, 6.
24. *Harper's Chicago and the World's Fair*, 74.
25. See 'Dedication at the Argo', *Chicago Tribune*, 19 June 1891, 1.
26. See 'Close of Yachting Season', *Inter Ocean*, 24 September 1900, 8.
27. See 'New \$25,000 home of the Chicago Yacht Club', *Inter Ocean*, 14 April 1902, 4.
28. Crew number varied according to ancient versions of the myth. Wikipedia cites eighty-five members collated from Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*; Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*; and Gaius Julius Hyginus, *Fabulae*. There were fifty-five in Appollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*.
29. Jack o' the Dust is an antiquated British Navy rank for the person who breaks out the provisions for the ship's cook.
30. The Argo Club actually had fifty-four members plus six honorary members.
31. 'Holdup at Argo Boathouse', *Chicago Tribune*, 27 September 1898, 2.
32. There are many Mark Twain quotes about swearing such as: 'If I cannot swear in heaven I shall not stay there.' Mark Twain and Albert Bigelow Paine, *Mark Twain's Notebook* (New York: Harper, 1935), 345; Lyle Larsen, 'Mark Twain and the Art of Swearing' <http://homepage.smc.edu/larsen_lyle/mark_twain_and_the_art_of_swearing.htm> accessed 03 September 2016.
33. 'Old Salts Visit Fort Sheridan', *Chicago Tribune*, 27 August 1892, 3.
34. 'Swami Vivekananda's Story', *Chicago Tribune*, 26 January 1894, 8.
35. His Eastern and Western Admirers, *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2004), 131.
36. Nelson, *Harper's Weekly*, 806.
37. Mary Swing Ricker, 'The Phelps Collection of Napoleonana', *The World Today*, 20 (Chicago, 1911), 228–30.

Swami Vivekananda's Unpublished Transcription and Translation of the 'Tri-Madhu' Verses

Vandana Jani

AN ORIGINAL HANDWRITTEN artefact of Swami Vivekananda, containing the English transcription and translation of the Sanskrit verses called 'Tri-Madhu', has been recently found.¹ Through scientific inquiry, many facets of these profound verses of the Rig Veda associated with some events of Swamiji's life are being presented here.

I found this artefact among the papers, notes, and other collections of Miss Emma Thursby at the New York Historical Society.² Miss Emma Thursby was a student of Swamiji, who attended Swamiji's Greenacre lectures and New York classes during 1894–6.

There is no signature or date on the paper. The artefact has three distinct sections. Section one, the top four lines, is written in elegant handwriting, section two is in free hand, and section three, the last three lines, is the Bengali alphabet.

Section one of the artefact reads:
madhu vata Ritayate' madhuksaranti Sindhavah
madhvargavo Bhavantu nah
madhumaggum vanaspati
madhumaggum parthivaggum Rajaha.
madhu naktam ivoshashi
madhu dvowrastu nah pita
madhu madhu madhu.

Section two of the artefact reads:

The breeze is blowing bliss, the oceans rain bliss
Our cattle be full of bliss—the dust of the earth
is bliss

The morning brings bliss
so does the night our father heaven is bliss
Bliss Bliss Bliss
Shanti Shanti Shanti Harih Om

Section three of the artefact is the Bengali alphabet.

I recognised that section one was the transliteration of the 'Tri-Madhu' verses of the Rig Veda, followed by its translation in section two. 'Tri-Madhu' is the triad of three well-known verses of the Rig Veda.³ Each verse begins with the word *madhu* and each contains the word *madhu* three times. The word *madhu* here means nectar-like sweetness or absolute bliss.

Glancing at the translation, I recalled that the text had a striking resemblance to Swamiji's words noted by Sister Nivedita in her journal as the 'fragments of the great benediction after mourning'.⁴ Also, the fact that the artefact was found with Miss Thursby's papers ignited a strong intuition in me and led me to hypothesise that the artefact *is* in Swamiji's handwriting.

The idea was very convincing, but it had to be verified. I approached Schaffenberg, a well-known handwriting examiner. Upon examination of Swamiji's other handwritten samples⁵ Schaffenberg concluded: 'The handwriting appearing on the subject document section two can be identified as being by the hand of Swami Vivekananda. Section one, although is of similar genre,

there is no standard writing that replicates what is found in this section and so cannot be identified as being by the hand of Swami Vivekananda.⁶

Simultaneously, upon my request, Dr Deba Prasad Saha, a Bengali litterateur, analysed the artefact, prepared an exemplar of Bengali alphabet and English writings from Swamiji's published handwritings, and observed many resemblances to the artefact. Based on these facts and his holistic approach to the research, Dr Saha is certain that Swamiji has written this entire artefact.⁷ The two partially differing opinions make the study of the artefact even more interesting.

Upon reflecting on the results, I felt that it is not only the science of written letters that help to identify the writer but what is in between the words is also important; the space that the writer breathes in, the environment that it paints, and the effects that it creates are vital factors because they whisper to us the real story of the writer.

In addition, considering other ancillary factors such as the artefact's origin in 1890s; its location in New York preserved amidst the notes of Swamiji's classes; the writer's evident knowledge of Bengali and Sanskrit; the profound Vedic content of section one; and the other two sections out of the three proven to be written by Swamiji, led me to infer that the artefact indeed is written by him. If we do not have so far a sample of Swamiji's writing in combined cursive-print style, then I am happy to say that now we *do* have it, in section one of this artefact!

What circumstances might have prompted Swamiji to write on this paper? Let's imagine being in Swamiji's class! The class has just ended. A few students are still around Swamiji. Perhaps they are asking about the words and meaning of the Sanskrit verses

that he had recited during the class. In response, Swamiji hums and keenly scribes; he pauses in between, and then completes the writing with the meaning.

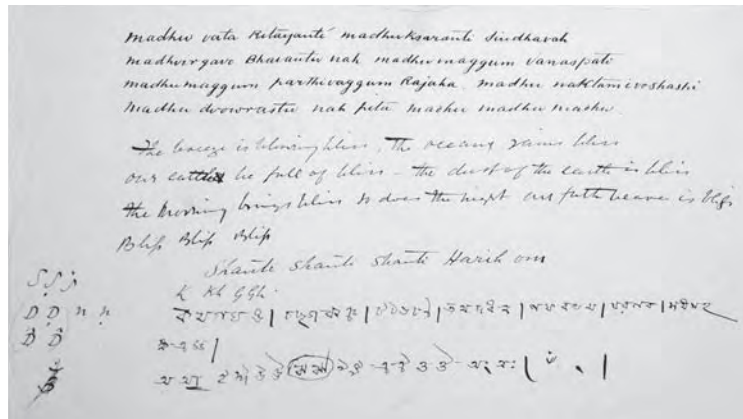
As I intently observe the paper in hand, the left side writing depicting *sa*, *śa*, and *ṣa*, awakens the corresponding sounds! The sound *śa* as found in the word *śānti*, might have prompted Swamiji to share a famous Bengali proverb about the three kinds of letters with the same 'sha' sound: '*Je shoi she roi; je na shoi she nash hoi*, meaning "Those who forbear, live; those who don't perish."⁸

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: 'In the Bengali alphabet no three letters are alike in sound except the three sibilants (*Sa*, *sha*, and *sa*), all meaning 'forbear', 'forbear', 'forbear'. This shows that even from our childhood we are made to learn forbearance in our very alphabets. The quality of forbearance is of the highest importance to every man.'⁹

Also written on the paper are the four '*da*' sounds: *da*, *dha*, *ḍa*, and *ḍha*. Swamiji may have demonstrated how to pronounce the *dha* sound in the words *madhu* and *madhvi* in the given verses. Similarly, he must have shown the difference between *na* and *ṇa*.

When comparing this artefact with the original verses from the *Rig Veda*, one notices that the sequence of the verses is different in Swamiji's

Facsimile of Swami Vivekananda's Handwritten Artefact



writings. Also, a few punctuations, words, and stanzas are missing. It is likely that his original intention was to provide the words and the meaning of the *Tri-Madhu*, but that may have led him to teach the ‘awareness of the phonemes’ in these verses. Imagine, he is pronouncing and writing the words like *madhumaggum*, *parthivaggum* for his Western students.

This inspired me to research how these verses in different instances gave voice to the inner spirit of Swamiji. One such instance took place on Sunday, 12 June 1898. Let’s travel with a group of pilgrims. We find that Mrs Ole Bull, Sister Nivedita, Josephine MacLeod, and others are among the pilgrims. They are traveling with Swamiji from Almora to Kathgodam in the Himalayas.¹⁰

It was in Almora where Swamiji had received the news of the self-sacrifice of the saint Pava-hari Baba and also the passing away of his beloved faithful stenographer J J Goodwin, who succumbed to typhoid fever. He said that one must conquer this illusion of death and know that the dead are here beside us forever; the absence and separation are a myth.¹¹

In such a state, Swamiji had chanted these ‘Tri-Madhu’ verses. Sister Nivedita further tells us:

He gave us fragments of the great benediction after mourning, which is one of the most beautiful of the Hindu sacraments;

The blissful winds are sweet to us.

The seas are showering bliss on us.

May the corn in our fields bring bliss to us.

May the plants and herbs bring bliss to us.

May the cattle give us bliss.

O Father in Heaven be Thou blissful to us!

The very dust of the earth is full of bliss.

(And then, the voice dying down into meditation),—

It is all bliss—all bliss—all bliss.¹²

Apparently, in this rendition too, the order is again different from the *Rig Veda* verses. Swamiji is experiencing the whole existence in a chosen

order, starting from the nature’s components such as wind and air, waters of rivers and ocean, to the living entities such as plants, herbs, and animals. Then he offers these verses as a prayer to the ‘Father Sky’ as well as to the blissful earth by reverently touching her blissful dust.

One may wonder why these verses of ‘sweetness’ are recited during the *Shraddha* ceremony, the Hindu obsequies performed for the dead. The priests of this ceremony must know the ‘Tri-Madhu’. They recite these verses in order to sanctify all. First, they pray for the one who has departed, whose five elements of the physical body have merged with Nature. As the subtle body of the departed progresses towards its next destination, they wish the journey to be blissful. Second, the priests also pray for the loved ones, the grievers, and the frightened ones who have witnessed the shadow of death. They are asked to resume their ‘duties’ in the world, knowing that their beloved surrounds them in the form of eternal bliss.

Another instance took me to 11 November 1899. Sister Nivedita in her letter written from Chicago to Josephine McLeod, describes the important events that took place at Ridgely in early November.¹³ She writes that how surprisingly, on Sunday, 5 November, Swamiji initiated Mrs Ole Bull and herself to the glorious but cautious path of renunciation, bestowing upon them the entire treasure he had received from Sri Ramakrishna. After that Swamiji was in a free, peaceful, and grand mood. He spent the next day, Monday, 6 November, humming and translating many Sanskrit verses and songs. One of these translations was again a part of the ‘Tri-Madhu’. Sister Nivedita had noted it down as follows:

The breeze is making for righteousness.

The seas are showering blessings on us—

Our Father in Heaven is blissful,

The trees in the forest are blissful,

so are the cattle.

The very dust of the earth is luminous with bliss—
It is all bliss,—all bliss—all bliss (1.235).

Swamiji was a great singer and composer of music. It is the artist who selects notes and sequence and creates the mood and breathes life in to the music through raga. Likewise, may be this great teacher's variations in utterances are reflecting the mood of the place, rhythm of the time, and the subtle shades of the surrounding culture. Swamiji himself has said: 'Everything requires to be changed a little according to place, time, and civilisation.'¹⁴


The differences in culture can interpret the meaning of words differently. For example, in Swamiji's artefact, the word 'Father Sky' is written for Sanskrit words *dyaauh*, sky and *pita*, father. It means the 'Sky' is the 'Father'. But Sister Nivedita writes 'Our Father in Heaven'. In this case the 'Sky' signifies 'Heaven', an abode where 'Our Father, the God' resides. This must be due to her cultural writing pattern. Later, as Sister Nivedita's experiences of Vedanta and Indian way of life deepened. She in her essay on 'Indian Study of Love and Death', writes the phrase 'Our Father-Sky', as Swamiji has written here in this artefact.¹⁵

Swamiji loved these 'Tri-Madhu' verses. One could see the tangible surge of the hidden energy of these verses manifesting through Swamiji. Swamiji's brother Mahendranath Datta had witnessed Swamiji's divine state in England in 1896 and has beautifully described:

One day the Swami said:

'You see at night I go to my room and lie down. I keep quiet for a while, and then within me so much *ananda* (bliss) arises that I cannot stay lying down. I see the Blissful Mother, men, animals, the sky and earth—all are saturated with bliss. I cannot lie down any longer; so I get up and dance in the middle of the room. That bliss can no longer be confined within my heart. The whole world becomes filled with it, as it were.'

While saying this he began to dance around like a child and said with affection to those present: 'Be happy, and don't be depressed; the Mother (Divine Mother) is everywhere; all will be filled with Bliss.'¹⁶

How alive are Swamiji's handwritten words of benediction in this artefact: 'Bliss. Bliss. Bliss. Shanti. Shanti. Shanti. Harih Om.' 

Notes and References

1. I would like to thank Sangeeta Mehta for her keen interest and assistance in the project and Neirah Bhargava for the photograph of the artefact.
2. This manuscript is preserved in 'Emma Thursby Manuscript Collection' MS 2530, New York Historical Society Museum and Library, New York <<http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/nyhs/thursby/>> accessed 03 September 2016.
3. See *Rig Veda*, 1.90.6–8.
4. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, 5 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2006), 1.307.
5. See *A Bouquet of Swami Vivekananda's Writings* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2013) containing numerous facsimiles of Swamiji's handwritten texts.
6. Karl Schaffenberger, handwriting expert and document examiner, letter of examination dated 22 August 2016.
7. Deba Prasad Saha, personal correspondence dated 23 July and 16 August 2016.
8. Swami Yuktatmananda, 'Fortitude', *Prabuddha Bharata*, 109/11 (November 2004), 573.
9. Prof. F Max Müller, *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2005), 123.
10. *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, 1.307.
11. See Pravrajika Vrajaprana, *My Faithful Goodwin* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2012), 2.
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13. See *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, ed. Sankari Prasad Basu, 2 vols (Calcutta: Nababharat, 1982), 1.234–5.
14. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 9 vols (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1–8, 1989; 9, 1997), 7.133.
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16. Mahendranath Datta, *Swami Vivekananda in London*, trans. Swami Yogeshananda (Chennai: Vivekananda Kendra, 2015), 145.

Swami Vivekananda's Unique Relationship with Buddha

Steven F Walker

IN A LECTURE GIVEN IN SAN FRANCISCO on 18 March 1900, Swami Vivekananda defined his unique relationship with Buddha in the following words: 'All my life I have been very fond of Buddha, but not of his doctrine. I have more veneration for that character than for any other—that boldness, that fearlessness, and that tremendous love!'¹

He went on to call Buddha 'the greatest man who ever lived'²—and this is only one of the many occasions on which Swamiji waxed enthusiastic about Buddha, publicly and privately. Sister Nivedita was later to refer to what she called 'his passionate personal adoration of Buddha' (171).

However, Swamiji's enthusiasm for Buddha does not seem to have been widely shared at first among his brother monks or among the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna.

Of course, at that time in Calcutta there was only limited information available concerning Buddha's life and teachings, with the signal exception of what was contained in Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879) and the play *Buddhadev Charit* that Girish Chandra Ghosh had partially based on it—a play we know that both Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji saw and enjoyed.³ And there was also Rajendralal Mitra's book *Buddha Gaya*,⁴ whose second chapter 'The Penance of Buddha' contained much information about Buddha's early life. This is the book that the young Swami Akhandananda, then

Gangadhar, discovered Narendra studying on his first visit to him in the summer of 1883.⁵

Sri Ramakrishna himself is not known to have practised Buddhism as a path to enlightenment, although he explored various Hindu paths as well as Islam and Christianity. Of course, Buddhism had almost completely disappeared from India centuries before, and this meant that Sri Ramakrishna would not have had the opportunity of meeting a living Buddhist teacher in Calcutta or elsewhere; consequently, both the catalyst and the guidance would have been lacking for him to practise Buddhist sadhana. Nevertheless, we know that in the autumn of 1881 Sri Ramakrishna asked Aswini Kumar Dutta to get him a picture of Buddha so he could add it to the pictures of avatars and divinities he displayed on the walls of his room at Dakshineswar;⁶ unfortunately, this request was never fulfilled, and no picture of Buddha is mentioned by M. in his description of the pictures in Sri Ramakrishna's room for 11 October 1884 (606).

However, precious indications concerning the relationship with Buddha on the part of both Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji are to be found in M.'s entries for 9 April 1886 at Cossipore. It is in many ways a mysterious and puzzling scene. Sri Ramakrishna had mentioned that Narendra had just returned from a pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya, and M. began the conversation by asking Narendra about the 'doctrines of Buddha' (947). Narendra replied that Buddha

'could not express in words what he had realized by his tapasya. So people say he was an atheist' (ibid.). Sri Ramakrishna argued against this allegation, basing his argument on the general idea that a fully realised soul cannot be called an atheist; otherwise, he seemed to manifest no particular knowledge of the actual teachings associated with Buddha. This seems to tally with his then asking Narendra 'What did Buddha preach?' (948). To this Narendra replied briefly, that he 'did not discuss the existence or non-existence of God' (ibid.). He then added—and we shall see later how central this was for what Nivedita called Swamiji's 'passionate personal adoration of Buddha'—'but he showed compassion for others all his life' (ibid.). Narendra illustrated this point by citing an example taken not from the life of the historical Buddha, but rather from one of his past lives as recounted in the *Jataka Stories*—in this case, the *Shibi Jataka*: 'A hawk pounced upon a bird and was about to devour it. In order to save the bird, Buddha gave the hawk his own flesh' (ibid.). According to M.: 'Narendra became more and more enthusiastic about Buddha' (ibid.), going so far as to compare Vyasa unfavourably with Buddha. The mystery of the scene deepened as Sri Ramakrishna, after a long silence, asked Narendra by signs 'whether he had seen a tuft of hair on Buddha's head' (ibid.). To this strange query Narendra replied that Buddha 'seems to have a sort of crown; his head seems to be covered by strings of rudraksha beads placed on top of one another' (949). In reply to Ramakrishna's next question, 'And his eyes?', Narendra simply said that they 'show he is in samadhi' (ibid.).

The interpretation that seems to me to make best sense of this mysterious scene is that, whereas Narendra was probably describing a detail of a statue of the Buddha he had just seen at Bodh Gaya, Sri Ramakrishna was probably

referring to an actual vision he had had of the Buddha. The odd detail of the 'tuft of hair' reminds one of Swami Saradananda's account of how Sri Ramakrishna once described Jesus Christ's nose as 'a little flat';⁷ his description of this precise detail was clearly the result of an actual vision, not of the viewing of an iconic image. Buddha's 'tuft of hair' cannot be confused with the Buddhist iconic *ushnisha*, which represents a kind of cranial bump symbolising wisdom. By contrast, Narendra's description of 'a sort of crown', with Buddha's head covered, as it were, 'by strings of rudraksha beads placed on top of one another', seems best to correspond to the frequent iconic representation of Buddha as having short tightly curled hair, falling down over his head like strings of beads. Such an iconic representation could easily have been seen by Narendra at Bodh Gaya on one or several statues of Buddha. After this, Sri Ramakrishna seemed uninterested in pursuing the conversation with Narendra about Buddha any further. Instead, he smiled and said humorously: 'Well, here you find everything—even ordinary red lentils and tamarind. Isn't that so?'⁸ It was as though Sri Ramakrishna were concerned with keeping his beloved disciple from becoming *too* enthused about Buddha, by whom Narendra was obviously quite attracted; rather, he wished to keep his heart and mind focussed on his own teacher, who provided everything he needed in the way of spiritual inspiration and guidance.

Sri Ramakrishna's concern is all the more understandable because we know that Swamiji, during his school years and sometime before his first pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in early 1886, had had a vision that he later interpreted as a vision of Buddha.

While at school, one night I was meditating within closed doors and had a fairly deep concentration of mind. How long I meditated in

that way, I cannot say. It was over, and I still kept my seat, when from the southern wall of that room a luminous figure stepped out and stood in front of me. There was a wonderful radiance on its visage, yet there seemed no play of emotion on it. It was the figure of a Sannyasin absolutely calm, shaven-headed, and staff and Kamandalu [a Sannyasin's water pitcher] in hand. He gazed at me for some time and seemed as if he would address me. I too gazed at him in speechless wonder. Then a kind of fright seized me; I opened the door, and hurried out of the room.⁹

If we juxtapose with this vision his first pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in early 1886, his conversation with Sri Ramakrishna cited above, and the many enthusiastic tributes to Buddha scattered throughout his works, we can conclude that Swamiji's relationship with Buddha was indeed unique. If one remembers that his last religious pilgrimage was to Bodh Gaya, and that he arrived there on the morning of his last birthday, then one may be ready to entertain seriously the idea that Buddha had been a powerful guiding force throughout his life. It is even possible that Swamiji's ideal of uniting spiritual struggle with service to the sick and the poor, which became the hallmark of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission as well as the inspiration for innumerable lay devotees, was an example of this. Although the inspiration of Sri Ramakrishna certainly lay behind the ideal of the service of God in human beings, it is not unreasonable to also see here at work the inspiration of Buddha, whose own boundless compassion for suffering humanity—'he showed compassion for others all his life', as Swamiji had emphasised to Sri Ramakrishna—had found continuing expression notably in the tradition of Buddhist charitable social work. This ideal of active compassion was emphasised over and over again in the Buddhist scriptures,

including the *Lalita Vistara*—an early versified life of Buddha—that Swamiji had had his brother monks read with him already in 1887.¹⁰ As is well known, Swamiji's project of encouraging the young monks of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission to combine contemplative sadhana with active service to the poor and afflicted met with some degree of resistance from those who had known Sri Ramakrishna well, and who could say with some justification that they had never heard the Master propose anything like it. But along with Sri Ramakrishna's exhortation, it could well have been Buddha who also provided Swamiji with a long forgotten example of putting this novel ideal of service at the center of spiritual life and struggle. Thus he once stated boldly that the 'Lord once more came to you as Buddha and taught you how to feel, how to sympathise with the poor, the miserable, the sinner, but you [Hindus] heard Him not'.¹¹

Or again, writing on 4 July 1897 from Almora, he underlined the link between this new spiritual ideal and the antecedent provided by early Buddhism's active compassion: 'Just now I am very busy with the famine ... The "feeding work" is absorbing all my energy and means. Although we can work only on a very small scale as yet, the effect is marvellous. For the first time since the days of Buddha, Brahmin boys are found nursing by the bed-side of cholera-stricken Pariahs' (248).

There is thus an important thread running through Swamiji's life that leads back directly to Buddha. Among many striking examples of this, it is good to remember that on 7 August 1895, the day before he left the Thousand Island Park, he went with two disciples for a walk in the woods and, according to Mary C Funke—one of those two disciples—sat under a low-branched tree. 'He suddenly said: "Now we shall meditate.

We shall be like Buddha under the Bo-tree." He seemed to turn to bronze, so still was he. Then a thunderstorm came up, and it poured. He never noticed it.¹² Swami Nikhilananda states that it 'is reported that one day, at Thousand Island Park he experienced nirvikalpa samadhi'.¹³ It is possible that this happened on this very spot, where today devotees can visit the rock on which he and his disciples sat and meditated, and can even see what remains of the 'Bo-tree'.

Much more could be said about Swamiji's admiration for Buddha's utter selflessness and infinitely compassionate heart, not only as regards people's spiritual misery but also their physical misery. Much more could be said about his praise of Buddha's clear-sighted analysis of the human condition, free of all sentimentality and superstition, and about his calling attention to Buddha's great contribution to the spiritual heritage of India. And recently Swami Ranganathananda has boldly called attention to the evils that have resulted in India from 'the banishment of the Buddha spirit, of the Buddha heart, from the thought and practice of our country'¹⁴—another topic well worth developing.

But I would like to end this essay with a short discussion of another topic relating to Swamiji's life and his unique relationship with Buddha. Near the very end of his life, Swamiji took care of a small menagerie of animals. It is heartwarming to imagine him at Belur Math, as Swami Nikhilananda has described him, happily surrounded by his pet animals:

The dog Bagha, the she-goat Hansi, an antelope, a stork, several cows and sheep and ducks and geese, and a kid called Matru who was adorned with a collar of little bells, and with whom the Swami ran and played like a child. The animals adored him, Matru, the little kid, who had been—so he pretended—a relation of his in a previous existence, slept in his room.

When it died he grieved like a child and said to a disciple: 'How strange! Whomsoever I love dies early'.¹⁵

Now what is worthy of note in some of Swamiji's many references to Buddha is his joy in pointing out Buddha's compassion for animals—an extreme compassion that in one case led him to offer himself as a substitute sacrifice in order to save the life of a sacrificial goat, or, as in the case of the *Jataka* story to which Narendra alluded in his conversation with Sri Ramakrishna, to offer his own flesh to a hawk in order to save a bird. Swamiji refers more than once to these stories; they really seem to have captured his imagination. For most modern people such stories might seem of slight importance for the understanding of Buddha and his teachings.

They were clearly important for Swamiji, however. His love for his animals offers an unexpected glimpse into the depths of his heart. Nothing is trivial in the life of a great soul. The picture we have of Swamiji surrounded by his pets at the very end of his life, charming though it is, can be also taken as potentially significant in two different ways. First of all, because it shows Swamiji spontaneously practising a particularly Buddhist form of compassion; like the Buddha himself—as Swamiji had remarked on more than one occasion—he has clearly and openly extended his love to animals, not just to fellow human beings. Secondly, in so doing, Swamiji may be seen as bringing his own spiritual life to a state of completion. Having 'fallen in love with Man,' as he had said of himself earlier, he is now prompted, at this final stage of his life, to take a loving interest in animals as well. This demonstrates once again how Swamiji never ceases to provide us all with new insight and inspiration.



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Vedanta and Human Management

Bharatwaj Iyer

PETER DRUCKER, the guru of modern management, in his famous book *The Post Capitalist Society*¹ says that in future industrial societies ‘knowledge’ would be the chief resource driving them forward. The main workers in such postmodern societies, he thinks, would not be people working on resources like land and labour but instead on a new sort of capital called know-how. These he terms ‘knowledge workers’.

But defining labour in such a way also means redefining what knowledge itself means, which in turns leads to a redefinition of human nature. And this is what Peter Drucker does, not only in this book of his, but in his project taken as a whole. Knowledge according to him is that which is useful for the progress of society, knowledgeable people being people who are socially and industrially usable. This utilitarian definition of knowledge involves its inevitable corollary: the utilitarian definition of human worth. Management as a science or art could be defined as a science or art dealing with the management of human beings or the knowledge resource embedded in humans. This being the case, the definition of the nature of the human being has a very crucial, and often ignored, connection with management. This connection, owing to the subject it treats of, is essentially philosophical. Human nature is not a management subject as such, but is a subject of philosophy, and so the correctness or otherwise of Drucker’s conception of the role of humans in society and the knowledge they own as their capital resource, is to be challenged or studied philosophically.

I venture in this paper to make bold that the prevalent underlying conceptions of modern management are more or less incorrect in their understanding of human nature. Human beings, even in the most liberal systems of management thought, are viewed ultimately as tools of the social and industrial machinery. Their understanding of knowledge and its usability in serving the wheel of the social and industrial complex, defines their understanding of human utility. Both these understandings of human nature and human knowledge are in the root flawed and are the major causes of the mismeasurement of humans—and so also their ‘mismanagement’—and environment that modern industrial capitalism could be held accountable for.

The Vedantic Point of View

The word ‘Vedanta’ is a cognate of two separate Sanskrit words *veda* and *anta*. Literally, it means the end or conclusion of the Vedas. Thus understood Vedanta means literally the last or concluding chapters of the Vedic literature: Upanishads. But understood at a metaphorical level it means the summum bonum or the conclusive point or final understanding of the whole philosophical endeavour of the Vedas; understood in that way too the meaning is not inapt. The teachings of the Upanishads indeed represent the highest and most sublime philosophical statements of the whole of the Vedas. The *Vedanta Sutra* or *Brahma Sutra* of Badarayana is the defining text summarising in a succinct and systematic form the whole philosophical

teaching of the Upanishads and thus stand as the cornerstone text of different schools of Vedanta.

I have, for the purposes of this essay, extensively made use of the *Kena Upanishad*, and a short didactic poem of Vedantic epistemology called *Drig-Drishya-Viveka*, as also the book *The Vedantic Self and the Jungian Psyche* by Dr Carol Whitfield.² The exposition now presented about the nature of man, knowledge, and the ends of human life has been written with these texts as the basic materials of study.

The Human Being According to Vedanta and Management Theory

Management—whether business, political, or otherwise—is managing or controlling of the persons, capacities, and resources of human beings. Being that, the science of management ought to first of all have a firm understanding of what human nature itself consists of. So far, management scientists seem to have just taken in the prevailing scientific notion of human nature as though it could just be taken for granted like that. That I think is a very pernicious mistake. For unlike the physical sciences, social sciences—and management according to me is a branch of social science—have deep, far-reaching, and really consequent bearing to human destiny in a society. Mistaken theories of human nature were what led to the atrocities inflicted on the Jews in the holocaust in Nazi Germany. And so it is very pertinent in my view that the understanding and proper defining of human nature stand at the very inception of any discipline among the humanities.

It is not untrue that most books on management will have a very humanistic and liberal view of human nature. This is because of the above-mentioned inheritance by modern management theories from the liberal social and libertarian movements in Western political and ethical philosophies around the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries. Taken on face value it may be really difficult to see what is so wrong about such a generous and humanistic view of human nature. Libertarians like Humboldt, anarchists like Bakunin, socialists like Proudhon, and the like, would invariably define humans as essentially free, creative agents whose intrinsic purpose is to explore their own capacities to the highest physical, artistic, and spiritual possibilities in an environment of freedom and free association. Such views are theoretically held but practically ignored for no simpler reason than that taken to their literal implication and application they would make a large-scale industrial capitalism impossible to practise.

For all intents and purposes, as Peter Drucker clearly elucidates as shown in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, management looks at human beings as agents working in a collective, serving their own needs by jointly serving the needs of the society in which they live and function. This society is mainly being driven by a few individuals with high concentration of wealth—in the form of the four factors of production; five if knowledge is included as a factor. Thus human beings, in the final analysis, are nothing but objects to be managed and manipulated so as to serve the needs of the few that control the very drive of society. That this problem, the problem of human manipulation, is mainly due to a misunderstanding of human nature, is what I am trying to point out. It is not to be understood that the essay is advocating a class-less socialist utopia or a government control of all resources and modes of production of society as communism advocates. Those alternatives have, in the course of history, produced blunders and laid human life to waste as much as capitalist ones. The essay holds that no matter what alternative you choose, the only surety for its success—in human and ethical terms and not just in terms of efficiency—is the proper understanding of human nature.

The Vedantic Answer

The human being is not an object. In fact, to say the opposite is a contradiction in terms. Human beings are, severally speaking, subjects. The Vedānta philosophy principally holds that human beings are not just beings of flesh, blood, bones, and minds. They are seen to be rather spirits or souls. The primary function of the self or soul in man is that of the eternal witness. This has to be first understood epistemologically or cognitively.

Speaking from the theory of knowledge, an object is that which is perceived. In the human being there are five senses for this perception: the eye, the ear, the tongue, the nose, and the skin. With the help of these organs of perception 'we' gain knowledge or perceive things external to ourselves, thus making them the 'objects' of our knowledge or perception. If external reality is the object, the perceiver of this reality is the subject of this perception. In order to become an object, the entity has to be perceived by another, which itself is not perceived. This is a cardinal maxim of Vedāntic cognitive theory. In order to better understand this subject-object divide, we need to study the *Drig-Drishya-Viveka*. But before that is done let me clear a few things and then proceed. The whole of reality is divided into subject and object—this rule applies to grammar too. The object is that which is being perceived or acted on and the subject is that which perceives and acts upon; more on this in the discussion that ensues below.

The Subject-Object Problem

Let us introduce a small thought experiment here. Let us say there are two entities in the universe: an eye and a stone. The eye sees the stone and knows it and its various characteristics. In this case the eye is the subject of perception and the stone is the object. The eye here cannot see itself—which will make it an object of knowledge and not the subject—for it requires itself for all

seeing to happen. Now let me introduce a third entity into this imaginary universe of ours: mind. When the cognition of the mind is introduced we find that the pure subjecthood of the eye is gone and the eye along with the stone becomes an object of knowledge. The mind can know the eye, the dimness of its sight, the strength of its vision, or simply its very existence. This makes the eye an object of the knowledge of the mind. Here, the ultimate subject seems to be the mind. For it knows the other entities—thus making them the objects of knowledge—and itself remains unknown to them or even by itself—for it forms its own basis for all mental knowing. Now let me introduce a fourth element into our analogy: consciousness. Even the mind, we observe, is subject to our knowledge. We know when the mind is awake or asleep, when it is attentive, when disturbed, and when in other states. That which shines its torch of knowledge even on the mind is consciousness, on which no other torch can be shone because it acts as the fundamental basis of all other knowing.

Thus by a step-by-step method, we come to the conclusion that the real subject of all objects is consciousness, pure and simple. Consciousness is absolute and thus it can never be the object of knowledge. Thus the search for a subject of all other objects of knowledge—which itself can never be objectified—took the Vedic seers to this conclusion: consciousness. It is the ever-subjective and never-objectifiable subject and that is what you truly are. That is the real 'I' in the depth of the human person. The human subject is not the organ, the body, or even the mind, but that which is the knower and witness of all these. This unknowable, un-objectifiable, non-material, and immortal essence behind the gross outward manifestation is the truly human person.

It is this core of the person that the *Kena Upanishad* points towards in its opening verses: 'Willed by whom does the directed mind go towards its

object? ... Who is the effulgent being who directs the eyes and the ears?’³ And to this question, the Upanishad provides its answer in a rather elliptical and paradoxical fashion: ‘He is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of speech’ (1.2). So it is the knower of the knowers, the perceiver of the perceivers, and the subject of subjects, which is the impeller of all knowing and all action.

Human Implications

Human beings are naturally, racially, and socially various. But they are essentially one. They are of different colours, creeds, races, and financial and social backgrounds but these differences among them are what pertain to the outward and superficial aspect of the human, attributable to the mind and the body alone. The truly real aspect of the human being is beyond these ephemeral, bodily and other differences, and pertains to the eternal.

Here the conception of *maya* comes really handy. Because of ignorance, human beings fall prey to superimposition and confuse something for something else. The classical Vedantic allegory for this is the rope and the snake analogy. In the dark, one may misconstrue a rope as a snake, and thus try fleeing away from it. But if light were to shine on it, then the true nature of the entity would become manifest and our behaviour with respect to it would be altered radically—the radical nature of change caused by the force of the knowledge of truth. The false notion of the snake was superimposed on the rope due to ignorance. In the same way the truth of the human personality is superimposed by innumerable falsifications caused due to the ignorance inherent in our nature and due to the lack of light. The Upanishads abound with stories where a seeker asks the guru to locate what and where really the human being is, and many do the mistake of considering the body, the breath, or the mind to be the human person. The realised sage alone understands, as we understood

through our thought experiment above, that all these are objects of knowledge known and acted on by a separate subject which doesn’t itself have a subject to know or act upon. The sage thus declares all these answers to be wrong as these instances are merely instances of the object, the ‘that’, and not of the subject, the ‘I’ which is what the human being truly is. Objectification—considering the object to be final—is seen to be the primary illusion.

Thus a truly sagacious person doesn’t see human beings as being essentially objects but rather the eternal and unknown subjects within. But being bound in flesh and blood that humans are, they cannot but objectify other beings around them to some extent, but the difference here is that that is not according to the realised sage, the final reality of people. People of course are rich and poor, with haves and have-nots, but these are merely external, bodily, social, and their ultimately ephemeral characteristics, and not their ultimate subjective reality which is unknowable, un-objectifiable, and eternal.

This has incalculable implications for human relations, which is the fundamental subject of management. The view of humans as spiritual entities helps increase the possibility of genuine ethical and moral human relationships with them. Worker-friendly policies of the management based on the notion of human equality gets profound emphasis by being reinforced by a philosophy that looks at human nature in a radically subjective and consequently, in a highly positive and healthy perspective. This leads to a decrease in totalitarian and dictatorial management policies and an increase in humanitarian approaches to human management in social, political, or organisational frameworks. A truly holistic approach to human relations is hereby developed, leading to a vision of the human being as neither a tool of knowledge nor labour but as a human being alone, eternally infinite. ☞

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Mandukya Upanishad

Swami Ranganathananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

Such a wise man never takes shelter under external objects. He entirely depends upon circumstances, that is to say, he maintains his body with whatever food or strips of cloth ... are brought to him by mere chance. ... No wise man recites any hymn to the deities or bows down before them, as he has no desires which can be fulfilled by their favour or grace. The word *Svadhā* refers to the ceremonies known as *Śrāddha* [ancestral rites] ... The sense is that wise man renounces even those actions connected with the dead which are obligatory for all people ... This is because the man of Knowledge, on account of the realisation of non-dual *Ātman*, does not find anything separate or different from his own self.⁶⁶

THAT IS WHY IN HINDUISM, if you give up these rituals, it is an honour. In any other religion if you give up this kind of ritual, you will be treated as a dissident, but here the scriptures say that you have done well. You must go beyond it. Those who go beyond it, they are highly honoured—highest order of monks. For the knower of Brahman, meditation is not necessary as a set meditation, the ritual rules meditation. But this life itself is a meditation. In the beginning children need ritual meditation, ritual puja, and other rituals; later on you don't need it. But in India, religion recognises that there is a higher state beyond this obligatory, pietistic religion. In other religions, such people are suspected. That is why they are all conformity; non-conformism means you will be hanged. Here non-conformism is welcomed because that is a higher state.

There is temple and a *jñani*, knower of Brahman, is lying outside. Puja is going on; he does not care to look into it. He will keep his leg towards the temple. In any other religion he will be punished. Guru Nanak was like that. In fifteenth-sixteenth century he put his leg towards the Kaaba. He was asked: 'Why are you doing like that? You change it.' Whenever he changed it, wherever he put his leg, that side appeared the Kaaba. That is the story told about him meaning thereby that these rituals do not apply to such persons. They are elementary. That there is an elementary stage and an advanced stage in religion is fully accepted only in the Hindu religion. In other religions, you simply sit in the same stage. But if you do like this, they will question. The priests are very powerful, not in Hinduism. A priest will come and touch the feet of this *paramahansa*, though the priests are doing the priestly work. Isn't it so in India? Even a priest will go and touch the feet of this man who is free, like Ramana Maharishi. Priests will go and touch his feet. 'What are we compared to this man? He has realised what we are trying to do.' That is the attitude. All this is due to the Upanishads. The blessing conferred by the Upanishads on the Hindu religion, in no other tradition you will find.

To the Upanishads India owes almost all the brighter sides of her life and culture. To them she owes her impressive record of active toleration within her borders and the uniformly peaceful and benevolent nature of her foreign relations in the field of religion. To them she owes the singular absence of aggressive political and military

policies and programmes on her part towards other nations, during her millennia of history. To them she owes the periodical renewal of her national springs of life when they seem all but choked and about to dry up. To them also she owes the absence of the heavy hand of an all-powerful church and the tentacles of an inescapable dogma on the national life and mind, allowing for the emergence and unhampered functioning, in succeeding periods, of free, creative, and universal spirits who came to purify and reactivate the dormant spirit of the people, who were received by the Indian people and given divine honours, unlike the hostility and persecution with which spiritual innovators were, and still are, received in all Semitic religions in the absence of the blessing of the impersonal background which the Upanishads had provided for the Indian religions, and whose procession down the ages is an impressive feature of India's long history.⁶⁷

Sri Krishna, Buddha, Shankara, Sri Ramakrishna—a procession was coming and they were received, and today India is in the threshold of similar search with the appearance of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. What would have happened if Jesus had been accepted by the Jews? Just think about it. The whole history would have been different. Jesus was a Jew, he didn't want to break away from the Jews, and he said: 'I have come not to break the law but to establish the law and the prophets.' He repeatedly said that. It was St Paul who took the whole religion outside Judaism. Apostle to the Gentiles, and to capture them, he said: 'Jesus came and died on the cross for your sins. Simply believe.' Quick religion and everything. So many people became Christians; in the decaying Roman Empire, they wanted some support. This was the quick support. Jews never know that there is a Jesus. In their religion there is no place for Jesus. Out of respect now for Christians they just say a little about Jesus, that is all. Otherwise, they don't have any place for Jesus.

One of the greatest verses is coming now:

'Tattvamadhyatmikam drishtva tattvam drishtva tu bahyatah, tattvibhutastadaramah tattvadaprachyuto bhavet.' The word *tattva* comes again and again. *Tattva* is the word for truth as it is, as different from *mata*, my opinion of it. You may have a number of opinions, but throw the opinions away. Are they true? When you come to know that, that is called *tattva*. Now, *tattvam* regarding the world and *tattvam* regarding the self; external *tattvam*, internal *tattvam*—try to realise it and become one with it. Live in the light of that *tattvam*. *Tattvam* is the science or philosophy, where you seek the truth of things, not a mere impression or opinion of anything. *Tattvamadhyatmikam drishtva*, realising the truth hidden in your own self. *Tattvam drishtva tu bahyatah*, realising the truth that is in the external world. *Tattvibhuta*, become one with truth. *Tadaramah*, take delight in truth. *Tattvadaprachyuto bhavet*, you will never fall away from that truth. You will live always abiding in that truth. That is the beautiful verse here. Same Atman is here. Same Atman is there. When Sri Ramakrishna told Naren, 'See god with eyes closed in meditation, with eyes open in action'; it is the same Atman everywhere. *Tattvamadhyatmikam tattvam cha bahyam*. *Bahyam* is out and *adhyatmika* means inside the self.

'The truth regarding external objects such as the earth etc., and the truth regarding internal objects characterised by body is that these are as unreal as a snake seen in the rope, or objects seen in dream or magic. For, there are such *Śruti* passages as, "Modification being only a name, arising from speech", etc.'⁶⁸ What is a wave? A modification of water. It is just a name, just a form. Actually water alone is true. That is the passage in the Upanishad: *'Vacharambhanam vikaro namadbeyam mrittiketyeva satyam*; all transformation has speech as its basis, and it is name only. Earth as such is the reality.'⁶⁹ You all belong to the species called *homo sapiens* with a special name and form—that's all.

You want name, you want form and *homo sapiens*—that is the universality, in which we are all participants. In the individual you are the same. That is why in biology, in logic, we say denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the species, connotation refers to the individual. When you want to define a thing, define it in terms of its denotation and connotation. A cow is a four-footed animal belonging to a species known as mammals—that is what we say, something like that. Denotation refers to the species, connotation refers to the individual. When you tell them together, you define a thing. So modifications are only mere names and speech, and mere form. A wave is a name and a form of what is always there called water. Any number of names and forms may come, but the truth is one. One gold, in the form of a bangle, in the form of an anklet, in the form of a bracelet—all this is gold, gold is the truth. These are names only and forms only.

‘The *Śruti* further declares, “*Ātman* is both within and without, birthless, causeless, having no within or without, entire, all-pervading like the *Ākāśa* (ether), [like space] subtle, unchanging, without attributes and parts, and without action. That is the Truth, That is the *Ātman* and That thou art.” Knowing it to be such from the point of view of Truth, he becomes one with Truth.’⁷⁰ In truth this is all the Atman, that is how Vedanta will say, though it appears as this and that. He becomes one with truth, which only in spiritual life can be, not in external life. When you understand a table you don’t become one with the table. When you understand your Self, you become one with it, not in the external world. One with the truth. That is why they say a clay elephant, a clay cat, and a clay mouse—one cannot become the other, but as clay they can become one. A clay cat and a clay mouse can never become one. They are all separate. So in forms we are all separate, we can’t be reduced into one except in a pulp. But as Atman we are all one.

He ‘derives his enjoyment from Truth’ (134). *Arama* means delight. You delight in this truth, wonderful truth, that we are all one. And we never deviate from that truth. You don’t get delight in the external objects but get delight in the Atman. ‘But a person ignorant of Truth, takes the mind to be the Self and believes the *Ātman* to be active like the mind, and becomes active. He thus thinks his self to be identified with the body etc., and deviated from *Ātman* saying, “Oh, I am now fallen from the Knowledge of the Self”’ (ibid.). We now say like that because of the attachment to the body and mind. Then only the sense of falling comes.

When his mind is concentrated he sometimes thinks that he is happy and one with the Self. He declares, ‘Oh, I am now one with the essence of Truth’. But, the knower of self never makes any such statement, as *Ātman* is ever one changeless and as it is impossible for *Ātman* to deviate from its own nature. The consciousness that ‘I am Brahman’ never leaves him. In other words, he never loses the consciousness regarding the essence of the Self. The *Smṛti* supports this view in such passages as, ‘The wise man views equally a dog or an outcaste’ [as the same Atman], ‘He sees who sees the Supreme Lord remaining the same, in all beings,’ [says the Gita] (ibid.).

Whatever may be the differences, we see the One behind. That is the teaching today in all political life. Don’t look at people as Australians, Indians, or Americans. Look at them as human beings. There is a big jump from the particular to the universal. And here we go deeper still. Human beings, animals, insects—why make a distinction? The same Atman is present in all. So, it is not humanism only, compassion for non-human beings also, when you realise the Atman.

This is a famous shloka: ‘*Tattvamadhyatmikam drishtva tattvam drishtva tu bahyatah, tattvibhutastadaramah tattvadaprachyuto bhavet.*’ No more falling down from the Truth. *Prachyuti* means fall; *aprachyuti* means no fall. Once you

know the truth, there is no fall. 'I am the Atman, infinite.' Ramana Maharishi said that he had the first experience at the age of eighteen—that is all, the first and the last. He always remembered: 'I am the Atman, deathless. That is my true nature.'

Now we go to the third section, *Advaita Prakarana*. Having said that this is non-duality and that this world of duality is an illusion, and having pointed out Advaita towards the end—inside, outside; one and the same. It is just like space—space inside the room, space outside the room—it is all one space. You make a distinction based on the wall; space does not know all these distinctions. The truth is that space is undivided. The fact is that space is divided. Two people will go, put a compound wall, and say: 'This is my land and that is your land.' The earth does not know all these distinctions. We are putting frontier walls, saying: 'This is my territory and that is your territory.' The earth doesn't know all these distinctions.

How much land do you want? Do you know that story? Tolstoy's story: How much land a man wants? Most of you must have heard the story. Tolstoy's short story it is; 'How Much Land A Man Wants'. Somebody announced that land will be distributed to people as much as they can cover in a running within a day, from sunrise to sunset. People came and a point was fixed from where you had to start, then go round and by sunset you must come back. Whatever land you cover that is yours. That was the announcement. So people came. Some people could cover a little distance and they came back. One man wanted to cover the maximum; he went on making wider and wider curves. As you go on curving more, you take longer time to reach the starting point. So almost he finished a vast area and was rushing towards the starting point, the sun was about to set, he just saw that only a second remains. With a tremendous effort he just came to the point and he died there. And the people said: 'Now, take three feet by six feet.

That is the land required for him.' Very famous story of Tolstoy. How much land a man needs? It is six by three. I read it long ago, Tolstoy's short stories. See the greed in the mind; he does not care for his life. One square foot more if I can take, a little more—that kind of thing.⁷¹

Now, *Advaita Prakarana*. Some radical utterances will come now. *Upasanashrito dharmojate brahmani vartate, pragutpatterajam sarvam tenasau kripanah smritah*. Those who believe in causality, they are small-minded people. That is the language. The real truth is above cause, causality. Those who believe in causality, they are small-minded people. Today's science goes beyond causality. And you can see there tremendous capacity for subtle thinking, say Heisenberg and others. 'The *Jiva* [or the soul] betaking itself to devotion (*upāsana*) thinks itself to be related to the Brahman that is supposed to have manifested Himself.'⁷² What is called normal religious life—we relate ourselves to a particular god, we worship it, we do this and that, throw flowers—all these we do. 'He is said to be of narrow intellect because he thinks that before creation all was of the nature of the unborn (Reality)' (ibid.). Before it was unborn, now it has become born. So, I am separate, I must go on worshipping and doing this and that. All these knowledge comes to small-minded people.

'While determining the meaning of *Aum*, it has been stated in the form of a proposition that "*Ātman* is the negation of phenomena, blissful and non-dual"' (ibid.). That we have said. Atman is the negation of all phenomena. He says, '*Prapanchopashamam*; negation of all phenomena.' *Shantam*, all peace. *Shivam*, all good. *Advaitam*, non-dual. That is the Atman. That is to be realised. 'It has been further stated that "Duality does not exist when the highest reality is known"' (ibid.). *Jnate dvaitam na vidyate*. It is only in ignorance that you see duality. In the highest knowledge, there is no duality. That was also said.

‘Further, in the chapter on Illusion, that duality does not exist really has been established by the illustrations of dream, magic, castle-in-the-air, etc., and also by reasoning on the grounds of “*the capability of being seen*” and “*the being infinite*” (ibid.). That is why it is unreal. Whatever is seen is unreal. Whatever is finite is unreal. Whatever is changing is unreal. ‘Now it is asked whether non-duality can be established only by scriptural evidence or whether it can be proved by reasoning as well’ (ibid.). Only have you to quote the scripture or can you reason? Ultimately it is all non-dual. ‘It is said in reply that it is possible to establish non-duality by reasoning as well’ (ibid.).

It is a beautiful Sanskrit sentence. *Jnate dvaitam na vidyate ityuktam. Upapattyadi tavidam shakya-ata iti pratiyasya adhyasya arambham.* That you can establish through *upapatti*, means reason. ‘How is it possible? This is shown in this chapter on *Advaita*. It has been demonstrated in the last chapter that the entire realm of dualism including the object and the act of devotion is illusory and the attributeless non-dual *Ātman* alone is the Reality. The word ‘*upāsanaśritah*’ in the text, meaning the one betaking himself to devotion’ (136–7). ‘God is separate from me. I must worship him.’ That attitude. ‘He is my real self.’ This attitude is correct and that one is wrong. ‘He is a separate god from me. I must worship him,’ etc. ‘Signifies him who has recourse to devotional exercises as means to the attainment of liberation and who further thinks that he is the devotee and Brahman is his object of worship’ (137). All this is *upasanashritah*.

This *Jīva* or the embodied being further thinks that through devotional practices he, at present related to the evolved Brahman (Personal God), [Brahman which has evolved into this universe that is the subject of causality] would attain to the ultimate Brahman after the dissolution of the body. Prior to the manifestation,

according to this *Jīva*, everything including itself was unborn. In other words he thinks, ‘I shall, through devotional practices, regain that which was my real nature before manifestation, though at present I subsist in the Brahman that appears in the form of the manifold.’ [I am one with this manifold universe.] Such a *Jīva*, that is the aspirant, betaking itself to devotion, inasmuch as it knows only a partial aspect of Brahman is called of narrow or poor intellect by those who regard Brahman as eternal and unchanging. The *Upaniṣad* of the *Talavakāra* (Kena) supports this view in such statements as, ‘That which is not expressed (indicated) by speech and by which speech is expressed, That alone know as Brahman and not that which people here adore’ etc (ibid.).

Brahman is not an object. Those who think it to be an object, they do not know the truth. Indescribable means that which cannot be expressed by speech. It is a text from the *Kena Upaniṣad*. ‘That which is not expressed by speech and by which speech itself is expressed.’⁷³ By its power speech can express things. The power behind speech is the *Ātman* and the *Ātman* cannot be expressed through speech. It is like a torchlight illumining the sun. Can you? Take a boy and tell him: ‘Boy, here is the sun; throw a torchlight towards the sun.’ Sun’s light will consume this torchlight. So the mind and speech cannot reveal the *Ātman*. But it is *Ātman* that helps mind and speech reveal objects. That is in the *Kena Upaniṣad*.

One who does not know the eternal and the unchanging nature of the Self, thinks of himself as separate or different from his real nature and has recourse to various spiritual practices in order to regain his Brāhmic nature, which he thinks he does, after death. Compare the Christian view of the ‘Fall of man’. These views are given in the Hindu scriptures also but refuted at the end from the standpoint of Truth, which is that even when a man thinks himself to be ignorant and tries to attain Knowledge by means of

spiritual practices, he *is* Brahman. [Even before you realise Brahman, you are already Brahman. But ignorance intervenes.] The nature of the non-dual Brahman never undergoes any change or transformation. There is no act of creation.⁷⁴

No causality, no act of creation. So many anti-causal ideas are put in modern science. Einstein never liked it. He was not reconciled to quantum physics. But quantum physics is a big challenge. An ignorant person has no idea of the changeless, non-dual self. It is just like a denominational Christian; has no concept of Christianity as a whole. Therefore, they go on fighting, quarrelling, on their own little creed and ritual. Christianity as a whole, he has no comprehension. He knows only his own little world of Christianity. Like a frog in the well. A frog lived in a well. After sometime a sea frog fell in there. And a conversation started: 'Oh, where are you from?' 'Oh, I am from the sea.' 'Sea? How big is it? Is it as big as my well?' He laughed. 'You compare the well with my sea. It is infinite.' 'Oh, you are a liar, nothing can be bigger than the well, get out from here,' he told. So we are all frogs in the well, Vivekananda said.⁷⁵ Christian well, Hindu well, Muslim well—frogs.

'According to his view the non-dual Self is also limited by time.'⁷⁶ That is why it is called a narrow mind. My doxy is orthodoxy, your doxy is heterodoxy. I have taken a copyright of God. A sect will say: 'I have taken a copyright of God. You have no right for having any conception of God.' Then they fight. That will come now. A few verses later. These narrow minds, they fight. They are intolerant, they persecute, because of this narrow mind. They don't realise the universality of Brahman. Brahman manifested in their little world. They say: 'Jesus said so, Jesus said so. He is the God, no other God is there.' They go on arguing. So, I say to them: 'Chicken brain. The world you see is narrow.' *Kripāna*. *Kripāna* actually means a stingy man. If you ask him for money, he will just take

ten cents and somehow with great difficulty, give you. Such a person is called *kripāna* in Sanskrit.

After having said this at the beginning, the next one is what is not *kripāna* attitude, non-narrow attitude. What is that? 'Therefore I shall now describe that (Brahman) which is free from limitations, unborn and which is the same throughout; and from this, one understands that it is not (in reality) born, though it appears to be manifested everywhere' (ibid.). Causality appears to be there, but question it and it is not there. Classical physics saw causality; modern physics does not see causality. When you go deep into nature there is no causality. In aggregate there is causality. In the individual item, there is no causality—that is what they used to say. Take a thousand electrons; there is causality in their movement. Take one, there is no causality. Just like in census or insurance companies, how many will die in so many years. Individually, it is all uncertain, but in collective statistics it is perfectly certain. That is why they can operate an insurance company. Out of ten thousand people paying money for insurance, some will die. But many will not die. Their money will be there. Here we have to pay immediately, thousands, but it does not matter. That is called statistics. So statistical averages we can predict. That is causality. Individual you cannot predict—how this fellow will behave. In all science today, the individual atom or electron we do not know how they will behave. But collectively we can predict. Just like crowd behaviour. Crowd behaviour you can very often predict, individual behaviour you cannot.

Universe as a whole, in its totality and reality has no causal beginning or cause and effect relation. It is beyond causality meaning thereby, at the heart of nature non-causality reigns and at the surface of nature causality reigns. Suppose in the body—you eat bad food, you get stomach pain. That is causality. We generally say: 'I

ate that. I got this trouble.’ Causal relation. But if you go deep into nature there is no causality. Just occurrences, that is all, no causality. Causal connection is due to ignorance.

It is accepted that in practical life, there is causality. But when you question, there is no causality. You investigate, causality disappears. That is why it is called a ghost. When you investigate a ghost, it goes away. It cannot stand investigation. Between manifestations, there is lot of difference. In the very fact of A becoming B, the word ‘becoming’ cannot be accepted. Nothing has become anything else. So becoming is due to ignorance. That is the idea. Causality is a state of the mind. Kant also said that time, space, and causality are three ways of operation of the human mind. And reality is seen in terms of these three—forms of perception.

Suppose in dream, you dream causality, isn’t it so? In dream you have causality. Now what is that causality in the dream? The whole thing is a mere tissue of imagination. All states of spiritual life are accepted in the relative experience, not in truth—this is the language used here. In relative experience, all this is there. Causality, time, space, earth being flat—all that is there. Isn’t it? There is embryology—slow growth of the embryo—all this we accept. The seed becomes a plant, a tree. But if you ask the question: ‘Does causality really exist?’ Then, all these will vanish, when you go to the smallest subtlest part of reality.

In reality it is unborn, though it appears born everywhere. That is why causality you find everywhere. Really there is no causality. Causality is an appearance. It is a form of human perception; human way of thinking is always conditioned by causality. That is the idea. This is Kant’s analysis: time, space, and causality. Non-causal thinking, you think over. The Atman is—that is the non-causal state. When there is unity, there is no causality, when there is duality there is causality.

In unity there is no causality, if causality is there, it means duality or manifoldness. If everything is the Atman, where is the causality? Atman causes Atman—it is tautology. It has no meaning.

Therefore, he says: ‘*Ato vakshyami akarpanyam.*’ *Karpanyam* is narrow mind. *Akarpanyam* is not narrow, infinite mind. *Ajati*, the unborn, the non-causal, *samatam gatam*, equal everywhere. *Yatha na jayate kinchit*, where there is no question of birth or causality or cause and effect relation. *Jayamanam samantatah*, though everywhere you find causality, strictly when you investigate, there is no causality. That is the mind which is free from all limitations. The unlimited infinite mind, you will realise through that, that the other things are all narrow, sectarian, limited.

‘One unable to realise *Ātman*, which is both within and without and birthless, and therefore believing oneself to be helpless through *Avidyā*, thinks, “I am born, I subsist in the Brahman with attributes (*saguna*) [limited Brahman] and through devotion to It I shall become Brahman”, and thus becomes *Kripāṇa* (narrow-minded)’ (ibid.). All such people, narrow-minded and they create conflict, intolerance—everything comes out of that. ‘Therefore, I shall describe Brahman which has never been subject to any limitation and which is birthless (changeless). The narrowness of mind has been described in such *Śruti* passages as, “When one sees another, hears another, knows another, then there is limitedness (littleness), mortality and unreality”, [a second thing, limitation] “Modification is only a name arising from speech, but the truth is that all is clay”, etc’ (138–9).

Things made of clay are only name and form. ‘But contrary to it is Brahman known as *Bhūmā* (great), which is both within and without and which is free from all limitations. [Just like space.] I shall now describe that Brahman, free from all limitations’ (139). If you take Jehovah, Allah, or the Hindu gods—they are all limited.

That is why those who believe in them are all limited in their understanding. Where is that limitless Jehovah? Ask that question. Limitless Jehovah, limitless Allah—that is the search for the Atman or Brahman. Out of this only toleration came, understanding came.

Jehovah made a covenant with Abraham saying, ‘These are my people, I will protect them.’ That is a tribal covenant; covenanted people they are called. Islam also is a covenant; Allah has made a covenant with his people. Outside that there is no covenant. So, God and his chosen people must always create narrowness. The circumcision is a sign of that covenant. It is for the Jews and Islam. Somehow, Christianity did not do it, because mostly it was preached by non-Jews. And the Greeks are not going to practise these things. They hated all these. St Paul was liberal that way. He wanted converts. These things did not matter; he could change everything.

‘Realising which one gets rid of all narrowness superimposed by ignorance. It (Brahman) is called *Ajāti*, birthless’ (ibid.). *Ja* means born, genetic. So, *a-jati* is not born. ‘Inasmuch as none knows its birth or cause. It is the same always and everywhere. How is it so? It is so because there does not exist in it (Brahman) any inequality caused by the presence of parts or limbs’ (ibid.). When there is impartible there is no causality, partible has causality, not impartible. ‘Only that which is with parts may be said to be born (or to have taken new form) by a change of its parts’ (ibid.). Birth is only a change of parts. But Atman is without parts, it is indivisible. That’s what I told.

No object can be indivisible, they are always divisible. Any particle in physics can never be indivisible. You can divide, provided your technical competence is there. To divide further and further, and further—indeinitely it can go on. Because they are all *drishya*, the seen. The only indivisible is *drik*, the self, the seer, the knower. ‘Therefore it

is without birth and free from limitation. Now listen as to how Brahman is not born, how it does not undergo change by so much as a jot, but ever remains unborn, though it appears, through ignorance, to be born and to give birth to others, like the rope and the snake’ (ibid.). The rope has given birth to a snake. When you investigate there is no birth at all there. ‘The truth is the rope does not become or does not produce the snake’ (ibid.).

It is only ignorance that John Smith is there, John Smith is here. How could he go from there to here so quickly? Till now he was in Atlantic—three days’ journey. Down the second he is just here. Can John Smith travel so quickly? No, John Smith cannot. But ignorance about John Smith, knowledge about John Smith can travel more infinitely than the speed of light. It is not like a thick fog. Fog moves very slowly. But this is a fog of ignorance. Knowledge and mind can travel at infinite speed.

‘*Ātman* may be said to be similar to *Ākāśa* (ether) or space, manifested in the form of the *Jīvas* (embodied selves) [You, you, and you—so many cut up space] which may be compared to the ether enclosed in pots’ (ibid.). So, if twenty pots are there, twenty *Akashas* are separate. But *Akasha* doesn’t know all these separations. It seems to be separate. ‘Again, as pots etc., are said to be produced from the *Ākāśa* (ether), similarly (gross) bodies are said to be evolved from the *Ātman*. This is the illustration of the manifestation (from Brahman, if any)’ (139–40). This is the nature of manifestation.

‘It has been said in the previous text, “I shall now describe Brahman, birthless and free from all narrowness”. Now I shall give an illustration and a reason to substantiate the proposition. As the Supreme *Ātman* is like the *Ākāśa*, subtle, without parts and all-pervasive, it is compared to the *Ākāśa*’ (140). Atman is compared to *Akasha*. *Akasha* is the word for space. Ether,

space, space-time continuum. 'The Supreme Self again, who is likened to the *Ākāśa*, is said to be manifested as the embodied beings (*Jīvas*)' (ibid.). Souls, just like *Akasha* enclosed by parts. So much *Akasha* enclosed in this part, in this part, in this part. That is all limitation. But, really there is no limitation. 'This is the Supreme Self which is like the *Ākāśa*. Or the sentence may be explained thus: As the totality of the *Ākāśa* enclosed within the pots is said to constitute what is known as the *Mahākāśa* or the great expanse of ether' (ibid.). The great space and the limited space. You make a distinction. This is limited space; that is unlimited space. But space itself is neither limited nor unlimited. 'Similarly the totality of the embodied beings (*Jīvas*) constitutes the Supreme Being' (ibid.). All of us put together is the supreme being. Totality of all souls is called God or Ishvara. That is Swamiji's definition.

(To be continued)

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(Continued from page 699)

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Vedanta Answers

Swami Smaranananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

[Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, has been asked various questions regarding various aspects of spiritual life by the young and old alike, over a period of time. This is a collection of such questions and his answers to them—*Editor*.]

QUESTION: In order to excel in academics, I have to sacrifice my health and reduce my physical strength. How to balance?

Answer: Again, you should be able to discriminate between what is good and what is bad, and how much time and energy you need to improve your concentration. Too much exertion may be counterproductive. All selfless activities will help you. A careful combination of various activities like meditation and service to the poor will gradually expand your heart, not the physical heart, of course!

Question: Should one transcend even innocent or sattvic happiness to attain permanent bliss? How can one attain the state of everlasting bliss? What daily activities should one perform in the struggle for attaining bliss? Is it meditation, service, or a judicious combination of various activities?

Answer: Real happiness comes when you have transcended all relative things. The Bhagavadgita talks about a *sthitaprajna*, a person of steady wisdom.

Question: Do supernatural powers exist? If they do, can you give a real-life example?

Answer: All powers—even those you call ‘supernatural’ are natural. To attain these powers

your mind will have to reach that particular plane corresponding to such powers.

Question: The happiness that one desires from one’s relationship with a fellow being such as a parent, sibling, spouse, or friend can be classified as what kind of happiness: sattvic, rajasic, or tamasic?

Answer: All happiness that is a result of attachment with anything worldly is either rajasic or tamasic. Only the happiness that one derives from higher thoughts and actions is sattvic.

Question: How can ‘Practical Vedanta’ help a student?

Answer: ‘Practical Vedanta’ can teach a student how to fix one’s goal of life and how to concentrate the mind so that the student can study one’s lessons more efficiently, with a lesser expenditure of time and energy.

Question: How can we see divinity in all and at the same time distinguish between the good and the bad in life? Because, does not seeing divinity in all mean seeing only good in all? Won’t this put one into difficulties at times?

Answer: To see divinity in all is not easy. For this you will have to manifest the divinity within you. When we realise the divinity within, then we can see the divinity in others.

Question: What should be the morality of a student? What should a student do or not do?

Answer: The foremost item of morality for a student is paying proper attention to his studies: ‘*Chhatranam adhyayanam tapah*; study is the austerity of students.’ In addition to that all things

considered moral in a society may also be practised, that is, selflessness is the foremost morality.

Question: Sometimes we hear: 'Believe that we are not the doer; God is the doer. We are just instruments in God's hand.' Does this sentence lead us to inactivity? Please explain?

Answer: Without realising what God is, saying things like, 'God alone is the doer', is mere escapism. If one can realise God, only then such sentences carry meaning. We will have to carry out our social and individual responsibilities in a selfless way which will lead us to such realisation.

Question: Can a student be a sattvic worker even though one eats non-vegetarian food?

Answer: If one eats non-vegetarian food or any food for that matter, without gluttony, then any one could be sattvic.

Question: Sometimes I get dejected when I am not able to do some work that I was supposed to do and could have done. Is getting dejected like this tamasic and rajasic?

Answer: Works done for fulfilling one's own desires are selfish. How work is to be done is elaborated in the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the Gita. By following them you can transform work into spiritual practice.

Question: You told about 'works' depending on one's state of mind. What are the characteristics of 'good work' like detachment, striving for excellence? Please elaborate.

Answer: Characteristics of the right kind of work are unselfishness and one-pointed attention.

Question: Are there watertight distinct compartments of tamasic, rajasic, and sattvic works or is there always a combination of these at any given point of time?

Answer: Everything in the world is a combination of all the three gunas. Out of these that which is prominent is attributed to one particular guna. So, all works or things are combinations of all the three gunas. See the fourteenth,

seventeenth, and eighteenth chapters of the Gita.

Question: In this competitive world, results matter and are significant. So, how to work detaching oneself from the results?

Answer: Works are attempts to transform one's desires. But, if work is done selflessly, it becomes sattvic.

Question: Please elaborate on the sattvic guna for students. How can a student evolve from tamasic to sattvic?

Answer: Follow the teachings in this regard as mentioned in the Gita already referred above.

Question: I feel that the more I desire something, the more I work for it, but the result I seek seems to go further away. How to solve this?

Answer: Everything takes its time. Don't be restless for the results. Do your duty; result will come in its own time.

Question: In what category would you put a person, who works only for the joy of working without expecting any result, say, for example, a player who plays just for the joy of playing?

Answer: Sattvic worker.

Question: Is bhakti a part of work?

Answer: Bhakti is a feeling, not work. A selfless work may spring out of this feeling.

Question: What is the importance and role of *abhyasa* in rising to a higher level?

Answer: *Abhyasa* means practice. You can attain the goal only if you practice. Can one become a General Manager, simply by becoming an engineering graduate?

Question: Swamiji, you told about karma yoga and bhakti yoga. What are the other yogas and what are their implications in brief?

Answer: Jnana yoga and *ashtanga* or raja yoga are the other yogas. All yogas lead to the same goal. Each person may follow a different path of yoga that suits one. Preference of yoga depends on one's attitude.

(To be continued)

The Psychological Aspects of Spiritual Life

Swami Nityasthananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

THERE ARE SOME SINCERE ASPIRANTS who cannot compromise with a lower ideal and at the same time, cannot attain higher spiritual goals. This involves prolonged inner suffering and conflicts. There is a verse in the Bhagavata related to this: '*Yashcha mudhatamo loke yashcha buddheh parangatah, tavubhau sukhamedhete klishyaty-antarito janah*'; the most foolish in this world and the one who has gone beyond the intellect—these two always remain happy. But the people in between these two extremes are distressed.³³

However, in spiritual life one has to pass through this state. The way to heaven is always through hell. Spiritual practice is like climbing a pole. And, if that pole is smeared with oil, it is all the more difficult to climb it. To climb that pole one has to wipe off the oil. Lust and greed are oil. Unless they are removed, spiritual practice is not possible. With the help of chalk powder of renunciation and detachment one has to wipe off the oil, then climbing is easy.

However, this agonising experience should not unnerve us. It is true that we have many shortcomings and weaknesses. We have to identify them and it won't do simply to admit that one is imperfect in a general way. We have to clearly identify the defects and try to overcome them without getting disheartened, certain that we would be successful. Swami Yatiswarananda says: 'In the psycho-analytical method so widely practised nowadays the patient is asked 1. to

regard the disturbing desire in a new light and accept it wholly or in part without fear or disgust, or 2. to face the trouble deliberately and reject it without feeling too much sense of guilt, or 3. to direct it along a higher channel to a higher goal.³⁴

Sri Aurobindo says in this connection:

Free yourself from all exaggerated self-depreciation and the habit of getting depressed by the sense of sin, difficulty or failure. These feelings do not really help, on the contrary, they are an immense obstacle and hamper the progress. They belong to the religious, not to the Yogic mentality. The Yogin should look on all the defects of the nature as movements of the lower prakriti common to all and reject them calmly, firmly and persistently with full confidence in Divine Power—without weakness or depression or negligence and without excitement, impatience or violence.³⁵

Different Faculties of the Mind

In any field, especially in spirituality, our success depends upon the control of our mind, and for this we need to know the different activities of the mind. According to Western thinkers, mainly there are three kinds of activity: thinking, feeling, and willing. There arise in the mind various kinds of thoughts related to different persons, objects, events, and so on, when we perceive and recollect them. And these thoughts can either be good or bad, true or untrue. Sometimes we entertain intellectual or rational thoughts, and through this process of thinking we acquire knowledge. This

process of thinking enables us to acquire an enormous wealth of knowledge. However, ordinarily this power of thinking gets dissipated in useless thoughts and unorganised thinking and unbridled imagination. We must cultivate the art of channelising our thought currents constructively, through the power of concentration.

Another faculty of the mind is feeling, which is more powerful than the former. We experience different kinds of positive and negative emotions arising in our mind, and these have a great impact on our thinking. As negative emotions have a negative effect on the body, so do positive ones have a positive effect. Swami Yatiswarananda says:

I know people who create worries if they have none and even magnify them, who periodically get emotionally involved in the affairs of others and create trouble for themselves and for those associated with them. They seem to thrive on tension! If we keep a steady watch over the wanderings of our minds, we can in many cases detect our emotional troubles, put an end to our self-created illnesses, and enjoy health and poise.³⁶

The third facet of the mind is willing—the determinative faculty. Normally this gets mixed up with desires. When a strong desire arises in the mind, the will locks arms with it, and we move forward to fulfil that desire. Our will is behind the good and bad resolves that we make. Generally, people have will and desire inextricably woven together, will being a slave to their desires. When we resolutely and consciously say ‘no’ to desires, only then can we identify the will as a separate entity associated with our individual consciousness. If we go on applying the will consciously in every occasion, we can increase the willpower, separating it from the current of desires.

In most people, there is no coordination between the different faculties of the mind and

as a result they suffer from confusion and conflicts creating a battlefield within. If one is trying to think about a person impartially, positive or negative feelings related to that person will interfere and vitiate such thinking. One’s liking or disliking that person will give a twist to objective thinking. There will always be some subjective colour in most people’s so-called objective thinking. Similarly, thinking will have its own influence on feeling too. One’s rational thinking might act as a hindrance in extending one’s love and compassion to a person. In many occasions of our lives, if the will is weak, both thinking and feeling would simply take it for a ride, and we would not be able to take right decisions or we would remain indecisive.

In the words of Swami Yatiswarananda:

Now we must aim at a still higher integration, and try to co-ordinate our thinking, feeling and willing. Our consciousness is usually associated with one of these faculties which dominates the rest. We may be over-intellectual or too emotional, or it may be that we have too strong a will and want to be active without caring for reason or higher emotions. This creates a cleavage within ourselves. We must co-ordinate the faculties, but how? We must learn to dissociate ourselves from all the faculties and come to our individual consciousness, make it the subject of our meditation and keep it steady. When from this detached state we come back to the faculties, we are able to coordinate them and make them work in a spirit of harmony for the common good. This is a great achievement (243).

(To be concluded)

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TRADITIONAL TALES



PAINTING: 'RAMANUJA WITH CHELUVA PILLAI', BADJAL / PATA CHITRA STYLE

The Heart of Acharya Ramanuja

(Continued from the previous issue)

ACHARYA RAMANUJA used to bathe in the Kaveri River every morning. He used to go to the river taking the support of his main disciple Dasharathi. While returning, he used to take the support of Dhanurdasa. Since Dhanurdasa was of a low caste, Acharya Ramanuja's brahmana disciples were offended by this act and openly criticised it. Acharya Ramanuja decided to tell every one of the divine qualities of Dhanurdasa and his wife Heramba.

One night, when everyone was asleep, Acharya Ramanuja tore a piece of cloth, the size of a loincloth, from each of his brahmana disciples' clothes that were put up for drying.

The next morning, the disciples saw their torn clothes, became furious, and started quarrelling with one another, even calling names. Finally, Acharya Ramanuja had to intervene. That night he told his disciples: 'Today, Dhanurdasa will come here and talk with me for a long time. You

would have to go to his house at that time. His wife would be sleeping. You would have to steal all her ornaments and bring them to me. Let us see what Dhanurdasa and his wife do upon this loss.'

Accordingly, the disciples went to Dhanurdasa's house that night. Heramba was sleeping and had kept the door open, expecting her husband. The disciples entered the house and stole her ornaments. Heramba could surmise what was happening. She did not move, lest the brahmanas run away. After the disciples had removed her ornaments from one side, she turned over, as if naturally doing so in sleep, to help them remove the ornaments from the other side. However, the disciples were afraid that she had woken up, and fled with the ornaments that they had already removed.

They went to Acharya Ramanuja and secretly told him everything. Acharya Ramanuja told Dhanurdasa: 'O' child! It has become dark. Please go to your house.' Dhanurdasa said: 'As you wish, my lord!' He then prostrated before Acharya Ramanuja and left for his house. Then, Acharya Ramanuja told his other disciples: 'Now, all of you secretly follow Dhanurdasa, see what he and his wife do, and let me know.' The disciples did accordingly.

On reaching his house and seeing his wife wearing ornaments only on one side, Dhanurdasa asked what had happened. Heramba said: 'My beloved! What shall I say? Those brahmanas should have been in truly straitened circumstances. That is why they have turned into thieves. At that time, I was repeating God's name, expecting your arrival. Thinking that I was asleep, those brahmanas removed ornaments from one side of my body. I turned to the other side to facilitate their removing ornaments on the other side. However, my bad luck, they fled.'

Hearing this Dhanurdasa felt sorry and said: 'Alas! Your turning to the other side was a big mistake. The idea of "I" has not left you yet. You

probably thought: "These are my ornaments. I am giving them to these brahmanas." That is why you missed a golden opportunity to get rid of these ornaments that are a great cause of bondage. Had you surrendered yourself to Lord Ranganatha and had not moved, they would have removed all the ornaments, thinking you to be fast asleep. This incident shows that we have not yet given up our egos.' Dhanurdasa chided his wife thus.

Realising her mistake, Heramba held the feet of her husband with tearful eyes and said: 'My lord! Kindly forgive me graciously and bless me that ideas of "I" and "mine" leave me.' The brahmanas were watching all this. They saw that this couple were leading a life centred in God, devoid of egotism and desire. Then, they returned to the ashrama, told Acharya Ramanuja everything, and went to bed.

The next day, when all the brahmanas assembled before Acharya Ramanuja for their usual lessons, he said: 'All of you have studied the scriptures thoroughly. But all of you have the pride of being a brahmana, contradicting all principles. You ought to show who a brahmana is by your actions. Yesterday morning, how furious were all of you, just because your clothes were torn a bit! And how did Dhanurdasa and his wife act on losing their precious ornaments! Whose behaviour was better, yours or theirs? Who can be appropriately called a devotee or a brahmana?' Acharya Ramanuja posed this question to his brahmana disciples at which, all of them hung their heads in shame.

Acharya Ramanuja told them further: 'One does not become a brahmana by birth alone. Only thoughts and actions determine whether one is high or low. At least from now on, try to live with good qualities, giving up the ego of being brahmanas. There is no greater enemy for a devotee than caste distinction born out of egotism. Accept as a friend anyone who can save you from following an evil path.'

❧^{PB}

REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



Why Grow Up?—Subversive Thoughts for an Infantile Age Susan Neiman

Penguin Random House UK, 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL, UK.
www.penguinrandomhouse.co.uk.
2016. viii + 246 pp. £ 9.99. PB. ISBN 9780141982496.

Most of us are nostalgic about our childhood and youth and think wistfully of the wonderful days that they were. The innocent pastimes one indulged in remind us of a blissful time. But on a deeper thought, was it because ignorance is bliss? Susan Neiman tries to lift the veil of fascination covering childhood and youth and tries to show its true picture, a period of forced ignorance. She does not waste time in setting the book's tone: 'Can philosophy help us to find a model of maturity that is not a matter of resignation?' (2). She defines her purpose: 'This book will argue that being grown-up is an ideal: one that is rarely achieved in its entirety, but all the more worth striving for' (22). Philosophy is not a veneer to cover up the feeling of defeat that comes with realising the truth.

It has long become a fad with philosophers to couch their statements in inaccessible jargon and circuitous analyses. Neiman comes as a welcome relief in the confusing sea of thinkers. Her language is natural and familiar and her style simple and smooth. She has a keen insight into the history of thought and compels the reader to go back to the pages of philosophy that one forgot to read closely, mainly because of the influence of how they have been understood till then. She makes us see Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant in a completely new light.

This is a book that breaks the fallacy of childhood being admirable and adulthood being a painful experience. One realises that 'infancy of reason is dogmatic' (ibid.). Adulthood is a

courageous experience of knowledge. Neiman affirms that we gloat over childhood because of our being 'lazy and scared' (5). She repeatedly tells us that childhood and youth are glorified because some powers want that to be so. Neiman is well-versed in psychology as the text and its subtext shows us throughout the book. She not only refers to psychological theories and experiments but her understanding of philosophy evolves from her understanding of individual and social psychology.

Neiman's concern over distractions that we have allowed technology to gift us is evident in the entire book. She tells us that consumerism is one of the principal reasons of our leaning towards adolescence: 'When consuming goods rather than satisfying work becomes the focus of our culture, we have created (or acquiesced in) a society of permanent adolescents' (19). She takes us through Rousseau's *Emile*, emphasising the need for rereading this philosopher and his thoughts on education. Neiman's keen insight into apparently eternal issues in education fascinates the reader with its freshness. Displaying her lively engagement with popular culture, she shows us that the movie versions of *Peter Pan* reflect how in 'less than a century, grown-ups declined from the merely dreary to the positively pathetic' (21).

However, the idea that childhood and youth are great periods of our lives is a new one, says Neiman: 'The glorification of childhood and youth, and the view of everything else after that as a let-down, is really quite new, and by no means universal' (32). She says that the 'nostalgia for childhood is confined to ... cultures that can be called WEIRD—as in Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich Democracies' (32). People living in other cultures like the present reviewer could vouch that this is not always the case. At least in India, childhood and youth have been

glorified for centuries and old age dreaded. Neiman is striking in her analysis and the logical extension of Plato's and Kant's thought. The plethora of choices for consumer goods given by the governments is a sweet distraction from more important issues.

Neiman's eloquence is poetic: 'Direct control leads to rebellion; indirect control leads to dependency' (39). 'Reason drives your search to make sense of the world by pushing you to ask why things are as they are. For theoretical reason, the outcome of that search becomes science, for practical reason, the outcome is a more just world' (115). She tells us that we need grown-ups to build an equitable society and reminds us that it was Rousseau who first treated growing up as a philosophical problem. Her statements are spiritual and sometimes have uncanny resemblances to the tenets of Advaita Vedanta. She almost repeats the Bhagavadgita when she says: 'Two passions, for glory and for luxury, are the source of all our ills; we are wicked because of the one and miserable because of the other' (53). But, her sentences are bereft of any religious colour or dogma. This book is a testimony to how philosophy and spirituality need not be frightening or out of reach. Neiman emphasises the need for an ideal and encourages that we strive for achieving it. And for this, we need to give an appropriate education to our children. 'Children are not born acting on principle, and most adults never get there. If we want them to have a chance of doing so, we have to adopt an education appropriate to their development' (58).

Neiman does a critical analysis of Rousseau's *Emile* and establishes that it is 'the clearest and most detailed practical manual of Enlightenment ever written' (56). This volume also traces various stages of the growing up of a human being. The first experience is surprising and wonderful and thereafter the surprise wears off. This is what growing up is, says Neiman. She is not content with easy explanations and believes that 'the claim that virtue is all there is to happiness is an eloquent variation on the fox's sour grapes' (114). Neiman argues that we stifle the interest of children to grow up by philosophising and learning, because it is easier to shut up questions.

Jean-Francois Lyotard asks: 'Why Philosophize?' (See Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Why Philosophize* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014)). He says we do that because 'there is desire, because there is absence in presence, dreadness in life; and also because there is our power that is not yet power; and also because there is alienation, the loss of what we thought we had acquired and the gap between the deed and the doing, between the said and the saying; and finally because we cannot evade this: testifying to the presence of the lack with our speech' (*Why Philosophize*, 123). Neiman convinces us that growing up and philosophising are the same thing and that we need to do it for the same reasons as Lyotard's. Only she does it in a much more eloquent and friendly manner. She gives her short reason for growing up: 'Because it's harder than you think' (192).

Neiman concludes her book by saying: 'Courage is needed to oppose all the forces that will continue work against maturity' because it is a 'process of permanent revolution' (234). Many misconceptions are cleared in this book, which is a revised edition of the original publication in 2014 and has all the qualities of a self-help book and much more. For instance, our attention is drawn to the fact that Enlightenment was not Eurocentric. On the contrary, it questioned blind adherence to European ideals. This is a book on parenting as much as it is a book about rereading Enlightenment. Philosophy has for once become readable and more importantly, enjoyable. Recommended for anyone interested in human life.

Editor

Prabuddha Bharata



**Chinnamastā:
The Awful Buddhist and
Hindu Tantric Goddess**
Elisabeth Anne Beard

Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, A-44, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase I, New Delhi 110028. www.mlbd.com. 2013. 176 pp. ₹350.00. PB. ISBN 9788120817487.

Wikipedia has replaced *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Yet if one reads the entries of each of the ten Mahavidyas in *Wikipedia*, then one longs for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Each *Wikipedia* entry has the same information and are haphazard. For example, the entries on Mothers Dhuvavati and Matangi are mirror-articles. And the entry on Mother Chinnamasta is a disaster. (See ‘Mahavidya’ and the links to the ten Mahavidyas <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahavidya>> accessed 06 September 2016).

Online searches regarding Mother Chinnamasta return arcane facts, mantras, and esoteric non-historical nonsense.

Elisabeth Anne Beard’s monograph is a readable source on Mother Chinnamasta. Unlike the material online that confuses the Buddhist Vajrayogini with the Hindu Mahavidya, Beard knows her subject. ‘Comparison of Buddhist and Hindu Tantra’ (75–8) is a concise discussion of the distinction between Buddhist and Hindu tantras available within the academic study of Hinduism and Buddhism. Studying Beard one understands that worshipping Mother Chinnamasta is to destroy ‘the internal enemy—ignorance which creates the illusion of separateness between a being and Brahman’ (105).

Motilal Banarsidass has done a great service by publishing this monograph as a paperback. But the book needs updating. Beard mentions that there is a temple of Mother Chinnamasta in Bishnupur. How is it possible that in spite of the Internet neither Beard, nor her Indian publisher has cared to either put in more about that temple or change the black and white pictures to colour? The plight of Hinduism as a missiologically oriented religion is apparent from this book. It is as if both the writer and the publisher want this book to be read by seekers after cultic and esoteric knowledge. But Mother Chinnamasta is not the patrimony of either Hindus or misleadingly fearsome tantrics. She is the Mother of all. Appendix I of this book detailing the Mother’s thousand names proves her universal Motherhood.

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Hatred and Forgiveness

Julia Kristeva

Trans. Jeanine Herman

Columbia University Press, 61 West 62 Street, New York City, New York 10023. USA. www.cup.columbia.edu. 2012. 336 pp. \$28. PB. ISBN 9780231143257.

The author Julia Kristeva says: ‘The disabled person opens a *narcissistic identity wound* in the person who is not disabled.’ She addresses ‘the very *borders of the human species*’ and finds it exploding (29) since disabilities cause anxiety in those who feel themselves mistakenly integrated. In short, disability evokes hatred in the non-disabled. Kristeva’s knowledge of the Bible and Catholic Religious Orders in relation to the polis (35–8) is central to understanding this book as itself a work of *caritas*, a theological virtue. This book in particular might have prompted Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942) to write on the Franciscans in his *The Highest Poverty* (See Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life* (Palo Alto: Stanford University, 2013)). Kristeva unabashedly praises the Franciscan way of life in this book (35). It surprises this reviewer that while Kristeva feels the need to study monasticism and Christianity and other religions to enact psychoanalysis, which is *caritas* in praxis, psychoanalysts and philosophers of the mind and cognition are stuck at Jacques Lacan’s (1901–81) clinical positions vis-à-vis clinical psychoses. To appear learned and confuse beginners, Lacan’s being a medical doctor is often forgotten. In universities around the world his *Seminars* (See *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, 20 vols (New York: Norton, 2007)) have nearly made psychoanalysis theoretical, therefore redundant, and something so obscure that few understand what the *real*, the *imaginary*, and the *symbolic* are in Lacan! Kristeva’s book under review could replace Lacan in universities where Lacan is meaninglessly taught and generations of students search the Internet to understand terms which only clinical practice can make explicit.

Kristeva, on the other hand, is the real heir to

the legacy of the misread Freud who ‘makes psychoanalysis a treatment of the passions by way of the passions: *he impassions in order to disimpassion*’ (93). Kristeva clearly understands the power and effect of psychoanalysis as distinct from medical intervention in the form of SSRIs and SNRIs: ‘We belong to a divided civilization ... globalisation hopes passions will be reduced under ... Prozac’s biological well-being’ (92–3). Lacan treated psychotics with anti-psychotics; Kristeva in her clinical practice treats patients through the hermeneutic of her own understanding of religion and classical psychoanalysis.

The ‘exciting word, *hatred*’ is generally seen as a ‘symptom or pathology’ (183) from which Kristeva will go on to vehemently differ since in her earlier clinical work she found that ‘hatred and desire [are] indissociable from speaking humanity’ (184). Hatred as seen by Kristeva in this book is part of the construction of what she had earlier written on: abjection (see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S Roudiez (New York: Columbia University, 1980)). According to Kristeva, the abject is neither ‘*ob-jet* ... or a transitional object’ nor is it ‘a correlate of the ego ... The abject has only one quality of the object—that of opposing the I’ (184). This opposition is primal hatred.

Kristeva reads Freud here as he had never been read before, even by her. ‘Digression on the Timeless’ (132–6) brings into focus the most neglected quality of the unconscious in psychoanalytic literature: ‘The unconscious ignores time’ (132). See note 8 on page 311 for an explication of this. This irrevocability of hatred and the transformation of hatred at most to hysteria—‘A humanity capable of laughing, out of love, and making light of love’ (227)—can only be understood through the timeless character of the unconscious from where arise fairy tales, myths, and even Renaissance tragedies like *Macbeth*. The first scene of *Macbeth* lends credence to the importance of hatred being entwined with timelessness and how forgiveness qua paranoia is a psychoanalytic trope which has little value unless we abandon Freud and accept Kristeva’s readings on religions. The third part of this book is important for psychoanalysts like this reviewer. It

makes explicit the techne of practising psychoanalysis. It is recommended that mental health-care professionals, humanities scholars, and those interested in various talk-therapies read this book as a summary of all previous books on the subject. What Horacio Etchegoyen in his monumental *The Fundamentals of Psychoanalytic Technique* (See R Horacio Etchegoyen, *The Fundamentals of Psychoanalytic Technique* (London: Karnac, 1991)) could not accomplish, Kristeva has done so in this book. She has revived the endangered but effective therapy begun by Freud and misread by so many others.

Kristeva’s choice of religious photos in this book (180–1) is refreshing as also her chapter ‘Healing, A Psychological Rebirth’ (153–8). Keeping with her rightful concern with the body she begins this chapter with those afflicted with cancer and then she goes on to detail the inner signs and internal logic of those who care for the terminally ill since ‘physical life is atrophying, the soul is dying. Modern man ... is somatising’ (157). Those who have not studied psychoanalysis from Freud up to Kristeva fail to understand that psychoanalysis is not a religion by itself or a substitute to religion. What Freud could not do, Kristeva has done. She has at last made psychoanalysis part of the arsenal for those whose jobs are to help others to self-actualise.

This reviewer suggests that this book be read in formative spirituality courses globally and within theology departments of all major religions. And non-theology syllabi framers should set portions of this book and if possible, the entire book, as set syllabi in domains as diverse as women’s studies (129–52) to studies in narratology (251–6). Kristeva strangely sounds more and more like Carl Jung. The eighteenth chapter, ‘The Triple Uprooting’ (213–21) is a psychoanalytic and extraordinary reading of *Exodus* and of the Old Testament prophets. This is the chapter which transforms Kristeva from a dry Freudian couch-therapist to a theologian who has earned her invitation to the College of Roman Catholic Cardinals to whom she had given Lenten talks for the latter’s spiritual retreat! This book is caritas and a rebuttal to hatred.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay

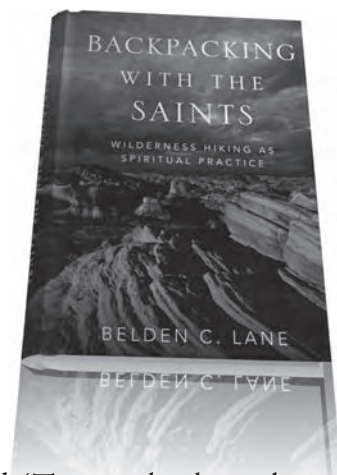
MANANA

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***Backpacking With The Saints:
Wilderness Hiking As Spiritual Practice***

Belden C Lane

Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. 2015. xviii + 266 pp. \$24.95. HB. ISBN 9780199927814.



I GO OVER the checklist of things I carry into wilderness, spread out on the basement floor. Simplicity is what counts here. None of this is high-end gear—more Army surplus and Campmor than REI. There's a Kelty pack with internal frame, a WhisperLite stove, my water filter and matching Nalgene bottle. Next to the old Peak mummy bag (good down to 15°F) are the Maglite, waterproof match case, and a first-aid kit from the Wilderness Medicine Institute. The usual stuff. This time I've added the Rhodes Mountain topog map for Wolf Hollow ... and a dog-eared copy of Cassian's *Conferences* (from the 'Classics of Western Spirituality' series). Deciding what to carry—and what to leave behind—is always the first step.

That's why I'm ambivalent about a book with a title like *Backpacking with the Saints*. You don't plunge into the wilderness with a 'how-to-do-it' book in tow. You can't squeeze spiritual insight into your sack along with a Swiss Army Knife. The wilderness doesn't open itself to books. Nor do the 'saints' offer easy answers. So I'm wary of hauling a library along on a backcountry trip—even one of the spiritual classics.

Will Rogers, the wry humorist from the Oklahoma hill country, had little confidence in the power of books to teach what the land usually teaches better. 'There are three kinds of men,'

he remarked. 'The one that learns by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence for themselves.' Some of us, men and women alike, have to learn the hard way, even though we carry a book along with us out of habit.

Women who write of their experience in wilderness say the same thing. Cheryl Strayed, in her recent book, *Wild*, recounts the mistakes she made on a three-month trip, hiking the Pacific Crest Trail alone. Anne LaBastille, wildlife ecologist and author of the *Woodswoman* series, writes of lessons learned living for years in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York. Gretel Ehrlich, struck by lightning while hiking in a thunderstorm on her Wyoming ranch, found healing in trekking the Greenland ice cap. Among the risks that Roshi Joan Halifax has taken in her life is a circumambulation (*perikerama*) of Mt. Kailas in Tibet. There she reached the top of the Dolma Pass at 18,600 feet, leaving the ashes of Tenzing Norgay, the first person to climb Mt. Everest. In 1955, Emma Gatewood was the first woman to hike the 2,168-mile Appalachian Trail—solo, at the age of sixty-seven. Initially thinking the trip would be 'a nice lark,' she drolly replied, 'It wasn't.'

Like many of these women, my chief reason for hiking is to 'walk off' an inordinate

attachment to words. I'm there to let the mind empty itself, usually after a long period of over-use. I follow my body instead, as it focuses on the demands of the trail. The last thing I want is a prepackaged interpretation of somebody else's experience.

Taking a saint along on the trail, therefore, isn't an intellectual exercise. It's more like hiking with a Zen master, having someone to slap me upside the head as may be required. The words of the saint aren't meant to absorb me in thoughtful insight. More often than not they stop thought altogether. 'Pay attention to what's going on around (and within) you ... right now!' That's what they invariably insist. So I seldom spend much time poring over a book in the wilderness. I *graze*, like bighorn sheep making their way over a rocky crag. I ponder lines I've underlined in a previous reading. I let the words sink in. Poetry is usually the best choice. A single saying of the Desert Fathers and Mothers can be more than enough.

Sometimes the experience of the trip may evoke an altogether different author from the one I've carried with me. Kicking myself for making a big mistake on the trail, I may have to go home to reread Luther on forgiveness. Witnessing an ecological disaster that cries out for justice, I return to dig out my worn-out copy of *The Essential Gandhi*. Saints have a way of coming to mind even when they haven't been bought along on the trail. The reality to which they point doesn't need a text to bring it to life.

What makes this practice all the more necessary is that I'm a recovering scholar, a university professor overly dependent upon words, working his program. For too long I've been addicted to footnotes, a compulsive attachment to critical analysis, an ugly habit of reading and writing to impress others. I've been trying for years, as an academic in recovery, to lure myself out of the

university and into wilderness. I've been asking how the history of spirituality and a study of place (especially wild places) illumine the spiritual life.

I long to hear the saints speak with a stark clarity, six miles in from the trailhead. Their task is to call me up short. They leave me speechless before mystery that's beyond my understanding, but not beyond my love. 'Become a lover,' urged Hāfez, the fourteenth-century Sufi mystic. 'As long as you see yourself as learned and intellectual, you'll lodge with the idiots; moreover, if you can stop seeing yourself at all, you will be free.'

Candor is essential here. After thirty years of modest experience, I'm still a novice with respect to the skills of backpacking and wilderness wandering. I stand in amazement at Robert Kull's fortitude in spending a year alone on a deserted island off the coast of Patagonia. I'm in awe of Doug Peacock's reckless forays into the grizzly country of northern Montana. I marvel at Craig Child's rambling through the Utah desert for weeks at a time, disappearing from civilization as we know it. Compared to them, I'm just another Ed Abbey wannabe, like a lot of Western storytellers after a couple of beers in the local tavern.

All I know is that solo backpacking is a practice that feeds me, even in moderately tame wilderness terrain. I don't have to face down grizzly bears or survive flashfloods in desert slot canyons to feel fully alive in backcountry. Facing down myself is enough. Flashfloods of imagined dangers are as scary for me as real ones. The interior landscape is the most dangerous territory I'm likely to explore. Yet to get there I have to keep venturing 'further up and further in,' as Aslan urged at the end of the Narnia tales. The spiritual life, in my experience, is a matter of moving ever deeper into backcountry, both literally and figuratively.



REPORTS



New Math Centres

Vedanta Society of **Greater Houston**, USA, has been made a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Math. Its address is 'Vedanta Society of Greater Houston, 14809 Lindita Drive, Houston, Texas 77083, USA'; phone: 281-9887211, email: <houston@rkmm.org>, and website: <www.houston-vedanta.org>.

A new branch of the Ramakrishna Math was inaugurated on 26 June 2016 at the historic and sacred **Ramanathapuram** (also known as **Ramnad**) where Swami Vivekananda stayed and delivered inspirational lectures on his return to India after the famous address at Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1897. A day-long function was organised in which 85 monks of the Ramakrishna Order, 25 monks who follow Sri Ramakrishna, and 3,000 devotees participated. The function commenced with *shodasha upachara* puja of Sri Ramakrishna along with *homa* and *pushpanjali* in the temple. On the stage, Vedic chanting was performed by all monks lead by Swami Yogirajananda. Bhajans were performed by Swami Yogirajananda, Swami Harivratanaanda, and Swami Swatmaramananda. A public meeting was organised. Swami Abhiramananda, Adhyaksha, Ramakrishna Math, Ramanathapuram, welcomed the gathering. Swami Suhitananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, delivered the presidential address and also released a commemorative souvenir. Swami Gautamananda, Adhyaksha, Ramakrishna Math, Chennai; Swami Atmananda, head of Kanavaipudur and Amaratipudur Ashramas; Swami Kamalatmananda, Adhyaksha, Ramakrishna Math, Madurai; and Swami Balabhadrananda, Assistant General Secretary, Belur Math, delivered special addresses. Sri Kumaran Sethupathi, Raja of Ramanathapuram;

Inauguration of the Valedictory Function of the Centenary Celebrations of Prabuddhakeralam at Thrissur.

Mrs Lakshmi Kumaran Sethupathi, Queen of Ramanathapuram; and Pulavar Ilankumaranar, Madurai, also spoke on this occasion. Swami Sutananda, Ramakrishna Math, Ramanathapuram, extended vote of thanks. In the evening, a cultural programme was performed by the students of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore, that was presided over by Padmashri Nalli Kuppusami Chetty, Chennai. The address of the centre is 'Ramakrishna Math, No. 1, Raja Aranmanai Mele Street, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu 623 501'; phone: 98849 88178 and email: <ramanathapuram@rkmm.org>.

News of Branch Centres

The valedictory function of the centenary celebrations of *Prabuddhakeralam*, the monthly Malayalam journal of the Ramakrishna Order, and the 15th All Kerala Sri Ramakrishna Bhakta Sammelan were organised at **Ramakrishna Math, Thrissur** from 12 to 15 August with the participation of about 1,000 devotees. The year-long *Prabuddhakeralam* centenary celebrations which commenced with its inauguration in June 2015 has now come to an end after organising district-level conventions in 14 districts of Kerala, a Sannyasi Sangamam participated by as many as 15 monastic Orders in Kerala, release of centenary special issue in October 2015, and the release of a DVD that contains all issues of *Prabuddhakeralam* from October 1915 to December 2015.

A memorial service in honour of Swami Tathagatananda, the former head of New York Vedanta Society, USA, who passed away at a hospital in New York on 25 June 2016, was held on 20 August at Redeemer Presbyterian Church,

West Side, New York. The service was attended and memories about the Swami shared by monks and nuns from various Vedanta Societies in USA and Canada. The service was conducted by the **Vedanta Society of New York**. The Swami had authored several scholarly books and also contributed many articles to various journals of the Ramakrishna Order.

Relief

Cyclone Relief: (a) **Andhra Pradesh: Visakhapatnam** centre laid 10,000 metres of HDPE pipeline and installed 10 water tanks to facilitate supply of drinking water to 265 households of 10 villages in Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagaram districts affected by Hudhud Cyclone that had struck those districts in October 2014. (b) **Fiji:** Continuing its relief work among the people affected by Winston Cyclone, Fiji centre distributed 151 cartons of clothes, 9 cartons of food materials, 6 cartons of shoes, 102 hand tools, 7 cartons of utensils, and 715 buckets in Rakiraki area in May. The centre also distributed 1,889 packets of agricultural seeds in Rakiraki, Nadi, and Ba areas and provided medical support to 1,490 patients in May.

Fire Relief: Bihar: On 3 May, **Katihar** centre distributed 2,125 kg rice, 552 kg puffed rice, 490 kg rice flakes, 85 kg sugar, and 85 utensil sets—each set containing 2 plates, a tumbler, a cooking pot, and a bucket—among 85 families affected by an accidental fire at Rampur-Mohanpur locality in Araria district.

Summer Relief: The following centres distributed buttermilk among thirsty wayfarers: (a) **Chennai Mission Ashrama:** 21,700 litres of buttermilk among 62,000 persons from 1 to 31 May. (b) **Hyderabad:** 40,100 litres of buttermilk among 1,60,000 people from 1 April to 26 May.

Winter Relief: The following centres distributed various items, as shown against their names, among poor and needy people: (a) **Narottam Nagar:** 251 sweaters, 227 jackets, and 227 sweat-shirts from 30 April to 22 May. (b) **Puri Math:** 951 sweatshirts from 22 February to 4 May. (c) **Shimla:** 506 warm garments from 3 to 20 May.

Distress Relief: The following centres distributed various items, as shown against their names, to needy people: (a) **Antpur:** 2,000 shirts, 2,023 T-shirts, and 2,013 pants from 24 April to 20 May. (b) **Baghbazar (Kolkata):** 1,996 shirts and 653 pants from 14 April to 12 May. (c) **Gurap:** 480 shirts and 281 pants on 7 and 10 May. (d) **Guwahati:** 100 mosquito-nets, 100 bed-sheets, and 100 dhotis on 1 May. (e) **Jamtara:** 305 shirts, 251 pants, and 323 T-shirts from 7 to 30 March. (f) **Kamarpukur:** 2,636 shirts and 1,700 pants from 9 April to 17 May. (g) **Malda:** 5,800 kg rice, 580 kg dal, 217 litres of edible oil, 435 kg sugar, 580 kg salt, 145 pants, 145 shirts, and 8 rolls of fishing net—150 feet each—from 6 April to 18 May. (h) **Mangaluru:** 200 schoolbags, 200 school uniforms, 200 umbrellas, 200 sets of stationery items—each set containing a pen, a pencil, a scale, and an eraser, and 10,650 notebooks among needy students on 29 May. (i) **Narottam Nagar:** 373 shirts, 418 pants, 251 T-shirts, 1,540 assorted ladies garments, 1,241 notebooks, 1,150 textbooks, 184 pens, and 47 pairs of slippers from 30 April to 22 May. (j) **Ponnampet:** 339 solar lights in the month of May. (k) **Puri Math:** 998 shirts and 543 pants from 22 February to 4 May. (l) **Sargachhi:** 2,500 shirts and 1,538 T-shirts from 1 April to 11 May. (m) **Sikra Kulingram:** 497 T-shirts and 150 pants from 6 April to 15 May. (n) **Taki:** 1,938 shirts, 2,075 pants, and 1,989 T-shirts from 9 to 24 May. (o) **Vijayawada:** 1,000 shirts, 474 pants, 300 saris, and 278 children's garments from 6 March to 20 April. (p) **Vrindaban:** 650 kg rice, 650 kg flour, 162 kg dal, 162 kg edible oil, 325 kg salt, 65 kg milk powder, 32 kg tea leaves, 81 kg sugar, and 325 bars each of bathing soap and washing soap on 9 May.

Flood Rehabilitation: Tamil Nadu: Two toilets built by **Chennai Students' Home** were handed over to two flood-affected families of Thaimanji village in Thiruvallur district in May.

Distress Rehabilitation: Karnataka: Ponnampet centre constructed 3 public toilets at Halligattu Deva colony in Virajpet taluk of Kodagu district in February.

Economic Rehabilitation: Ponnampet centre distributed 11 sewing machines to poor and needy people on 22 March.



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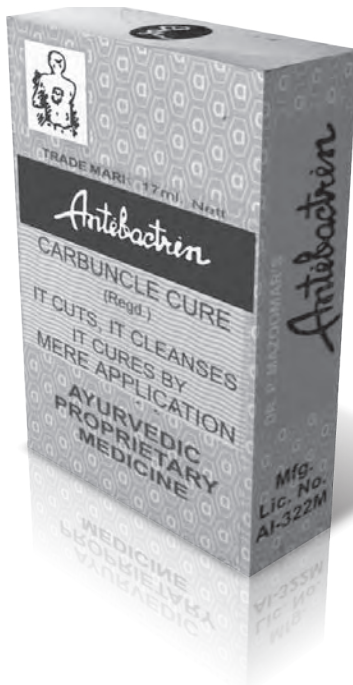


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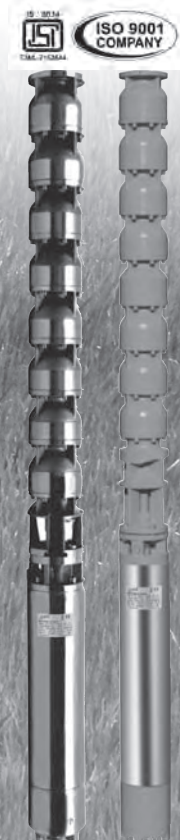
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RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA

(Headquarters : Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, (Near Kolkata)
Dist. Howrah, West Bengal - 711 202)
Swami Vivekananda Marg (Beed Bypass),
AURANGABAD - 431 010.

The Universal Temple of Bhagwan Shri Ramakrishna (Under Construction) An earnest Appeal for generous donations

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please accept our greetings and best wishes.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Aurangabad located on Swami Vivekananda Marg (Beed Bypass) is a branch center affiliated to Headquarters, Belur Math (near Kolkata). This ashrama is conducting various service activities in the field of health, education, child welfare, as well as spreading spiritual message of eternal religion as propounded by Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

This ashrama has taken up a new project of erecting a temple of Shri Ramakrishna. The work was commenced in December 2009 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2016. The day of inauguration has been fixed tentatively as 13th November 2016, Sunday.

The temple will be a unique and imposing monumental structure of its kind in entire Marathwada region in general and Aurangabad city in particular. It will add a cultural and spiritual dimension to the historical city of Aurangabad. It will be a great attraction and a place for worship, prayer, meditation and inspiration for the local people. It is also expected that the good number of general public visiting Aurangabad city as tourists for visiting world heritage sites such as Ellora & Ajanta and pilgrims for visiting Ghrihshneshwar Jyotirling, Shirdi, Paithan etc. will include visit to the temple in their itinerary. It is aimed for the benefit of one and all without distinction of caste, creed, and nationality.

The estimated cost of the entire project is Rs. 15 Crores. So far Rs. 11.00 Crores have been spent through public contribution. The balance amount of Rs. 04.00 Crores is needed to complete the construction of the Temple.

We earnestly appeal to you to donate generously for this noble cause. Your support will indeed go a long way in our endeavor to erect this magnificent architectural edifice in the memory of Shri Ramakrishna who was the unique harmonizer of all the religions of the world and who dedicated his life to bring peace and welfare of mankind.

We value your help and co-operation immensely.

Yours in the service of the Lord,

(Swami Vishnupadananda)
Secretary

Proposed Universal Temple of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna



Model of the Proposed New Temple

Temple Dimensions

Length: 156 ft. Breadth: 076 ft. Height: 100 ft.

Temple Construction Area : 18000 Sq.ft.

Garbhagriha : 24ft. x 24ft.

Temple Hall for Prayer and Meditation

70ft. x 40ft. Seating Capacity - 450

Auditorium (Ground Floor)

80ft. x 57ft. Seating Capacity - 500

The entire Temple will be built in Chunar sandstone
and interior in Ambaji and Makarana marble.

Ceiling of the Temple Hall will be done in Teak Wood

Estimated Cost : Rs. 15 Crores

We accept Online donations. You may please credit your donation directly on our Online State Bank of India, MIT Branch, Aurangabad, A/c No. 30697728250, (Branch Code : 10791, IFSC Code:- SBIN0010791)

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Translation:

1. Reflection on Sri Sri Ramakrishna 2. Childhood of Swami Vivekananda 3. Nari Adhikar (Hindi)
4. Manab Kendric Sabhyata (Hindi)

Allied Books.

1. Dialectics of Land Economics of India - By Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta A.M. (Brown) D. Phil (Hamburg)

The Mohendra Publishing Committee 36/7, Sahitya Parishad Street, Kolkata - 700006.

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We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran.

Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

— Swami Vivekananda



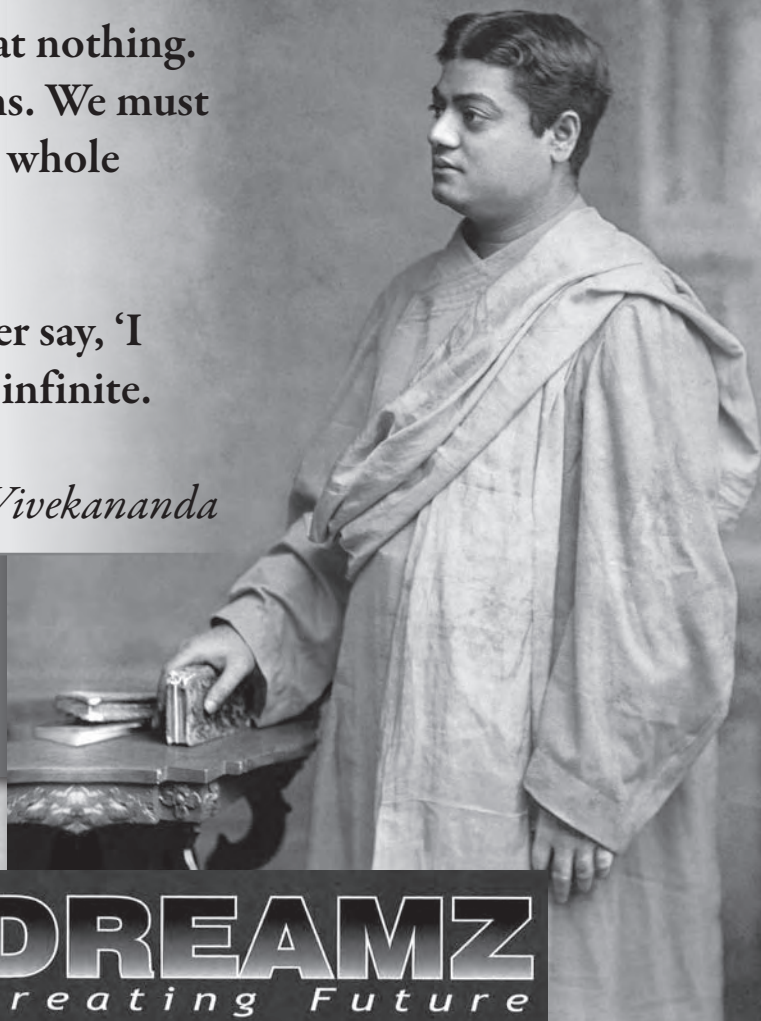
Each soul is potentially divine.
The goal is to manifest this
Divinity within.

Strength is life, weakness is
death.

Fear nothing, stop at nothing.
You will be like lions. We must
rouse India and the whole
world.

Never say, 'No', never say, 'I
cannot', for you are infinite.

—*Swami Vivekananda*



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The best guide in life is strength.
In religion, as in all other matters,
discard everything that weakens
you, have nothing to do with it.
—Swami Vivekananda

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